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Lonely God, lonely man

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LONELY GOD, LONELY MAN

*A study in the relation of loneliness
to personal development, with a re-
evaluation of Christian tradition.*

by DEAN TURNER



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Dedicated
to the two persons I love most in this world—
my mother and father.

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All quotations from *The Holy Bible* are taken from the King James Version.

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LONELY GOD,
LONELY MAN

CHAPTER 1.

LONELINESS

The person who has just opened this book is lonely. The writer is lonely. All creation is lonely. Every living being is lonely. All of us are lonely, because the God Who created us created us in His loneliness. Loneliness is *the* problem in every person's life. Loneliness is the *spring* of all problems; it causes, encompasses, and sustains all problems. This work will substantiate clearly that loneliness is the cause of life, because it is the fountainhead of all life's endeavors. Loneliness is the source of all good and evil. If loneliness were not the power behind action, then we would never do good nor evil, for we would simply exist in a state of inaction, or we would not exist at all. If we did not long to possess what we have not yet possessed, or long to be what we have not yet become, then there would be no cause to act and no activity. It is an incontestable fact that we would never act if we

were not lonely. We would never act, because we *could* never act, for the simple reason that there would be no foundation for an act. Loneliness precedes all life. Loneliness is indispensable to life. Loneliness is that which is before all else.

CHAPTER 2.

LONELINESS AS A PROBLEM

Not only are we, the writer and reader, lonely; but we are lonesome. We may deny that we are lonesome, but we can never escape from our loneliness.

The reality of our loneliness and the pain of our lonesomeness is something that we usually refuse to admit.

Society has put a very high premium on adjustment, psychological stability, and freedom from lonesomeness. As a consequence of this, the individual is reluctant to admit that he is lonesome, because he is afraid of stigma. We are not supposed to appear lonely or to feel lonely. To admit that we are lonely is like admitting that we are not what we are supposed to be, or else that we have become something other than what people think that we should be.

Psychologists, theologians, and metaphysicians have written mountains of literature treating of loneliness as a symptom. They have considered loneliness to be an effect instead

of a cause; consequently, they have exerted thought in all directions except toward the heart of the problem of what loneliness means. The real problem of loneliness is what loneliness is as a cause, and why it has to be. For reasons which I shall explain throughout this work, people have been fearful to face loneliness honestly as something that is eternal, as something that is essential to life. People usually concern themselves with a problem only if they think its solution will afford some sort of relief or convenience. It just happens that a true understanding of loneliness does not afford comfort. Understanding the nature of loneliness does not make life easier. On the contrary, it makes eternal demands of the person who understands. Understanding loneliness is the key to a greater life, but not an easier life. It levies a heavy tax on the spirit. It antagonizes all tendencies in a person to dormancy, indifference, and self-satisfaction. Which is one reason, among others, why men have evaded the heart of the problem. The problem of loneliness is eternal. Few persons have faced it realistically. The multitude have invented sundry rationalizations to distort its meaning or to deny its reality.

After the ardor of the original Christians waned, the Christian metaphysics of loneliness became a sedative. Living beside the wisdom of Jesus, the disciples had open sesame to eternal truths. They found the meaning of loneliness in the character of Christ. Their understanding fructified in great works. The fire of their spirits swept the country like a mighty wind. Then the disciples died. After they passed, the apostles passed. Theologians began to interpret what they had never seen, had never felt. They became patrons of a pedantic attempt to appreciate God. Their false metaphysics of loneliness became traditional, and produced today's brotherhood of Christians, most of whom practice

only trifling moral care. Christianity today is diseased of moral mediocrity. It is vain in its affected understanding of care.

The aim of this work is to expound the moral purpose of the burden of loneliness, to make clear what loneliness is, and why it is. It is an error in terms even to acknowledge a Christian metaphysics of loneliness. To be sure, we misrepresent traditional thought when we confer this phrase to it, as the fault of Christian theology has been its neglect of a metaphysical concept of loneliness. Christian psychologists have dealt with the relief of lonesomeness through love for God, but they have failed to clearly distinguish between lonesomeness and loneliness; consequently, they have failed to follow the implications of loneliness concerning the nature of God's Being. They have treated loneliness only as a symptom, and have construed its causes through a psychology that is devoid of metaphysical bearing. Psychology may combine with ethics to explain the origin of feelings of loneliness in social relations, by describing kinds of conduct that lead to lonesomeness in alienation from others. But the why and the wherefore of loneliness is the burden of the soul, and a union of psychology with ethics without a metaphysical foundation sheds little light on the meaning of the inevitable experience of lonesomeness in living. Confining the concept of loneliness to psychology, men have failed to comprehend what loneliness is. They have not defined it accurately. They have not grasped that it is something essential to life. They have confused the lonely person with the lonesome person, and consequently have brought to nought the relation between loneliness and moral care.

Ordinarily, people think of the lonely person as one who is conscious of his own solitude. A person is lonely if he is depressed by his aloneness, and only insomuch as he senses

his depression. The lonely man is remote from society. He is without company. He is alone; and in his aloneness he is spiritually desolate. Sociologists usually think of loneliness in terms of the individual's social isolation, of whether his need for gratifying relations with others is fulfilled in his association with others. The sociological approach to loneliness is correct as far as it goes. For no man can really overcome his need for friends, for a mate, or at least for close and loving relations with his brothers.

Regarding the problems of social living, what this work offers does not treat of social techniques. I regret the limited reach of this work; for though our libraries are plump with literature on social methods, there is yet great need for deeper insights into our problems of living together. Our social psychology is inadequate. In spite of impressive publicity acclaiming its greatness, the science of psychotherapy today is in a stage of infancy. Our psychology of the "sense of urgency" (the causes and meaning of anxiety) is almost purely an organic psychology that is shallow in metaphysical understanding. We need a psychology that sees beyond organic symptoms and causes. We crave justification for the anxiety we must suffer that no amount of knowledge of psychology can prevent. It is common procedure of the psychoanalyst to assure his patient that anxiety is natural. One may understand that it is natural—but this cannot prevent its inevitable painfulness in the mind. Anxiety marks the greatest minds of every age. Anxiety is necessary; and the real purpose or reason for it is not given in the psychology of our time. The inevitable suffering of living beings is either purposeful and meaningful to God, or it is ultimately meaningless even to man. This work will show that it is meaningful, that its justification lies in a metaphysical

understanding which is beyond reach until people open their eyes to the loneliness of God.

Because of the absence of an adequate conception of loneliness, theories of value have been immature. They have been steeped in trifles, and have failed to unite the theoretical man with the practical man. Theories of value arise in the need of men for guidance in distinguishing what is important from what is not important. An adequate theory of value would guide men to fulfill real needs. Practically, it would lead them to acquire what they need to possess, and help them to become what they really need to be. The Christian ethics of care has most nearly succeeded in this respect. But Christian believers at large do not merit commendation as examples of proper care, which is a fact that suggests shortcomings in the metaphysical theory on which the traditional ethics of care is based. Most people who give credence to great love do not practice great love. The general lack of concurrence between Christian credence and Christian practice suggests a metaphysics of care that fails to inspire. We need to care greatly. We need to live with great sympathy. Preoccupied in our secular and selfish aims, we have resisted opportunity to learn to sympathize and to love greatly.

We should except this remark for some primitive peoples. There have been some primitive groups (and there still are) whose material and economic problems have been readily solved, because of a natural abundance of food, simple shelter needs, and a comparative freedom from disease and aggressive enemies. These people have had abundant opportunity to learn to sympathize and to love. Anthropologists have described some communities as closely knit, highly stabilized units possessing a great *esprit de corps*.

Nevertheless, for lack of adequate definition, anthro-

pologists have seldom questioned the freedom of these peoples from real loneliness. It is true that they were societies of great order, in which most members adhered closely to the social laws. But the taboos and social laws sometimes were extremely problematical, as they conflicted with the desires and needs of peculiar individuals. As much as modern men, primitive men needed to be true individuals. Though in some societies they were not governed by an urge to excel, many were burdened with special talents that were frustrated by rules. In every society and age there are individuals with inhospitable social impulses, or at least conflicting and frustrated social needs. In every well knit social body there is close adherence to community rules. But it is common knowledge that no society can be perfectly stable. All groups are dynamic, in that no society can achieve immunity to change. Change in a society is inevitable, because of the inevitable occurrence of conflict in the self-seeking of individuals. The business of having an ego makes the individual's adjustment in a permanently stable society questionable. Egos are dynamic orders. In varying degrees, egos are naturally individual and different. They differ in both the quality and quantity of social urges, and, *ipso facto*, are forever susceptible to deviation from rules. Which means, that not only a permanently stable society is impossible, but also, even a rigorous temporary stability is impossible. Social stability is more than mere physical peace in the community. It is the spiritual harmony of all individuals who affect one another. When a person longs to do, have or be what others will not permit him to do, have or be, inevitably in frustration he will cause social disharmony. The loneliness of individuals at variance is inevitable.

Anthropology has approached loneliness in terms of the variances of whole societies, or else the disruption within a

given group by the rebellion of its members. Anthropology defines itself broadly as the science of man. It concerns itself generally with human environment, the origin and distribution of races, and social relations and culture. In this work we are only secondarily concerned with the symptoms of social congregation and isolation. We are primarily concerned with loneliness as something that is eternal, and as something that precedes all social conditions. Hence, it is understandable that anthropology has little here to offer.

Psychoanalysis has moved more closely to the problem of loneliness as something which acts as a cause. In this field, loneliness is regarded as the state of a man who is in conflict with himself. The lonely man is isolated from people whose feelings and opinions matter, because he is alienated from himself. As a symptom, loneliness is regarded as a state of confusion, sadness, or conscious boredom. As a cause, it makes the bored or maladjusted person realize that he is not at home with others because he is not at home with himself. By resolving conflicts within himself, he resolves his social conflicts, and his symptoms of loneliness disappear. Accordingly, loneliness as a cause ceases to exist.

There are few things that can profit a man more than an understanding of the causes of self-dissension, depression, and boredom. Nevertheless, it does not follow that an understanding of mental dynamics can relieve a man of basic loneliness. One can safely say that psychologists regard loneliness and the feeling of insecurity as essentially the same phenomenon. Insecurity is a broad term encompassing any real sensation of discomfort, any really negative kind of emotion. Insofar as it goes, this psychological conception of loneliness is true. But the fact that loneliness is something permanent, and more than merely a symptom of self-dissension or social isolation, is a fact which if properly understood

could aid psychologists no end in helping to create better persons. A man can have ample understanding of the psychology of emotions. He can understand the psychology of motives. He can know the causes of social retreat, social aggression, or social upheaval. He can know the elements of personal satisfaction. He can accept his work, love his wife, and love his children—but still be lonely.

In the terms of psychology, a man is not alone if he is with a gratifying companion. He is not lonely if he is pleased in himself. This work will show how so limited a conception of loneliness has retarded the moral evolution of humanity. The conventional psychology of the self has failed to grasp the real nature and purpose of loneliness. A metaphysics of the self is now needed to relate the meaning of loneliness to moral struggle. When the nature and meaning of loneliness is understood, one tends to moral care, to the struggle required to act out care.

A man is always lonely. To exist as an individual, as a true, separate self, it is impossible ever to be completely un-lonely. Loneliness inheres in the separateness of the self from other selves, in the self's incompleteness, in the self's aloneness from others. Loneliness also inheres in an awareness of aloneness, although a man is lonely even when he is unaware of his aloneness. In the separate existence of the self from other persons and things, loneliness pervades the incompleteness and non-allness of the self. Loneliness is essential to the existence of the self. A living being cannot exist but as a self, as a unique, incomplete being apart from others. We can always reduce our lonesomeness. We can do it by enhancing our consciousness of a favorable relation to other persons. A love-faith union with other persons and God reduces our lonesomeness through the sharing of selves. But it is not possible to completely overcome loneliness; nor

is it desirable. Life cannot proceed except in a self; nor can it proceed except in incompleteness. To overcome loneliness entirely, a man should have to overcome the very selfhood of himself. To escape the loneliness of his incompleteness, he should have to convert to total aloneness in self-completion, which would mean an utter unrelatedness to other persons. To exist as an individual is to exist separately from others, and also in relation to others. As loneliness is fundamental to the self's existence, a person can pacify his awareness of loneliness in relating harmoniously with other persons. But he cannot entirely escape his loneliness without losing his relation to others.

It is inconceivable that a happy, un-lonely self could exist in utter aloneness. Some theologians have described God as a completely un-lonely Person, as though He made man and the angels without any need to share, to love, and to possess others. Traditional thought has supposed that at one time God existed completely alone. In His aloneness, God was infinitely happy. Existing in a state of perfect completion, God had neither a need nor a duty to create other persons. For God is considered immutable. He has been so forever; and He does not depend on changing things as the source of his happiness.

This work will show the harm that has been done by unrealistic conceptions of God. I shall show that extravagant conceptions of His nature are largely responsible for lack of care for Him. There are demoralizing contradictions in the theory of the immutable Creator, which have been originated and propagated in a fearful unwillingness of persons to face the meaning and reality of loneliness. God created man because He was lonely. An immutable person could not be lonely. Or at least, if he were lonely, he nevertheless could never act to gratify his needs. God is a Person.

He is infinitely more than any human person; but He is conscious of unsatisfied longing in Himself, and of unfulfilled purpose, which are conditions essential to being a person who acts. God is not a dead, changeless being who creates children who have no effect on him. God lives, and our lives affect His life. The Father and the children are dynamically, personally, and morally interrelated in an eternal moral cause. God created us, and is affected by us, because He is a Moral Person. If His purpose is not moral, then the morality of man is an illusion, or else God as the source of moral meaning is an illusion. If we never affect God, then our communication with Him is a lie, and His morality is a lie. If God created us never to be affected by us, then it is absurd to think that He would have created us at all. God did not create man without loneliness, any more than any person can act at all without loneliness. By virtue of the definition of the immutable person, he could never act. For immutability is changelessness, and change is the very essence of action. In the acting person, change occurs in the very nature of his being, in the degree of fulfillment of purpose and meaning in his self-realization. An immutable person could never create, because the fact of creation would imply a change in the order or meaning of his being. If a changeless person once created something new in his being, that previously had never existed in his being, then, *eo ipso*, the addition of something new within himself would imply a change of his previous being. It would be grotesque logic to say that God created the world out of nothing. To grant this would be to affirm that something exists outside of God's Being, even if it is only the negative reality of "nothingness." God created us out of Himself, by way of action or change within Himself. Otherwise, if God created us out of something outside Himself, then He could not be

Infinite Being. The fact of nothingness would delimit His Being.

God created the world. He created man.

Man is the loneliest of all beings—except God.

In this work, I want to show that God is lonely. It must be that He has always been lonely. In God's great, holy loneliness rests eventually all the surging moral power of creation. God created man, and perhaps infinite universes of other persons to love, because he needed to love others, and wanted to be loved in return.

I respect the motives of theologians who have desired to exalt the idea of God. That they have believed in an infinitely good and wise God (whether or not they have acted accordingly) can be doubted only in a careless or cynical manner. We need God, immeasurably much and forever. Christian thinkers have realized this as much if not more than anyone. But they have fallen to moral inconsistency in creating the illusion of a God unaffected by the suffering of His children. They have made the moral nature of God's goodness a trifle, and have erected a metaphysical theory of the self that belies reality. They have lost sight of even a child's more true evaluation of the meaning of loneliness.

In adulthood, a person seldom understands loneliness as much as he understood it as a child. When he was a child, loneliness had a pungency about it, a severe, eternal gravity or awfulness that he felt certain must lie in the very heart of reality. The man is never as much alone as was the child. His mother was perhaps an abiding shield against lonesomeness, a deeper kind of loneliness than he has ever felt since. When he was alone as a child, in darkness, he was terribly alone. When he depended, he depended terribly. He loved and cherished more deeply. He hoped more deeply. If the man could now hear his childish prayers, he perhaps would

be amused at certain petitions to God. But he would know that he prayed more deeply in his childhood, that the meaning of benefit from loneliness in prayer was deeper.

In some ways, growing older and intellectually sophisticated can mean the same as becoming intellectually lost. The specious abstractions about the Satisfied God cannot reach the depth of the child's judgment of the reality of loneliness. Our separation from each other is real. Our incompleteness is real. Our loneliness in this separation and incompleteness is real. Indeed, it is so real that its meaning goes to the very ultimate heart of all meaning. Loneliness is universal; it is inevitable and eternal.

Christian theological systems ultimately center upon God's nature as the nucleus of all meaning. The problem of the meaning of loneliness must be solved in getting closer to the nature of God. The motive in the traditional apology for the completely happy God is easy to understand. Men have been so burdened by loneliness that they have wanted to destroy its meaning altogether. Frightened by the necessity of eternal growth in eternal loneliness, they have denied that loneliness is ultimately real. Or at least they have denied that it is real in God, and have created the insoluble problem of how God could be responsible for the origin of loneliness in man.

If it were true that God is completely happy, then what suffering man could find it possible to connect his own loneliness and unhappiness with God's transcendent bliss? Some people become lonely and unhappy enough that they are drowned in misery and confusion. The person who suffers this confusion, and believes that God is unmoved by his misery, cannot but wonder at the abyss between God's immutable happiness and the person's own loneliness. Theolo-

gians and philosophers fail to do justice to God when they deny that suffering is known to Him as well as to man. They imagine that God is a happy whole, in which the contradiction of unhappy parts is ignored in a wish to ultimately become the whole. Every man is a child of God. Every man is lonely. Every man must suffer. Jesus suffered. Either God is conscious of loneliness and suffering or He is not. If He is not, then He is blind to the miserable condition of the children He created. The illusion of traditional thought is that a Moral God can be conscious of the suffering of others without suffering Himself. One cannot but wonder how this contradiction is resolved in God's mind—that He knows what suffering is, yet has never experienced it. Traditional thought acknowledges that the moral greatness of Jesus necessitated His suffering for others. Yet, in effect, it denies God's compassion by making Him completely happy and above sorrow. Traditional thought sets in abeyance the logic of Christ's morality in order to create a non-moral God. As though by some fiat beyond moral logic, the Father was just in asking The Son to bear a burden that The Father would not bear.

don't know

The traditional conception of God's nature has not helped men to bear the burden of loneliness any more than has sociology or naive psychology. Some sociologists have claimed that man's salvation from loneliness is possible in the achievement of a quasi-perfect, scientific society. Some sociologists have deemed science capable of discovering ultimate social or moral laws. Also, they have deemed it possible by scientific means to persuade all men to adhere to the laws. But men who have proclaimed this possibility have had little to offer when pressed for a practical scheme to bring a perfect society about. Fortunately, their exaggerated

hopes have been discredited in our better books and journals; and the illusion of utopia has been kept out of enlightened social planning. Even in religious literature there is no evidence that a perfect and eternally stable society is possible. In paradise revolt occurred. Even solely, two persons, in the Garden of Eden, could not live stably. Like the morning star in the old myths, the archangel Lucifer rebelled and was cast out of heaven.

In the four Gospels' account of the life of Jesus, clues to the meaning of loneliness can be found on almost every page. Jesus did not portray God as an infinitely happy, satisfied, and immutable being. The Gospel conception of God's perfection is confined exclusively to His moral perfection. The early Church Fathers and theologians have converted the meaning of perfection into a romantic extravaganza of mythical qualities that Jesus never attributed to God. They have exaggerated His knowledge of God's perfection. They have distorted it, and have made it a system of illusions that would deprive God of moral meaning. This work will show that the Son of God was the loneliest of men. He was by every qualification the greatest Person who ever walked in our midst. Imagine the moral glory of Jesus, as He conversed with His Father in prayer, and we will not close our eyes to the meaning of His suffering for mankind. The heart of the Crucified Man was dipped in loneliness. His every thought and feeling represented the character of God. This Father of Jesus is a God lonely for the love of His children. He is sorrowed by our petty jealousies, enmities, and prejudices. He is grieved by our abysmal egotism and sloven care.

It is unthinkable that the God of Jesus observes our living conditions and is infinitely happy about them.

The traditional conception of the immutable being fails

to realize the heroism of God as it is revealed in the struggles of His Son. The purpose of this work is to fathom the meaning of loneliness, in showing its epitome in the personality of the Suffering Man. In the suffering of Jesus, we see how loneliness is meaningful to the act of love, and to the act of moral care.

CHAPTER 3.

LONELINESS AND CREATION

It is not easy to be an humble and honestly critical person at the same time. Since we consider both humility and critical reflection to be virtues, as thinking persons we have a great problem in discovering and respecting truth. It is a moral commonplace that he who searches for truth, and trustingly submits his ideas to examination by others, is deserving of great respect. He who loves truth and searches for it ardently, then finally possesses it, is a great person if he courageously lives according to it.

In this work, the truth of the existence of God is not argued. It is accepted, *ad hominem*, that the virtue of humility is made eternally real and meaningful by the existence of an eternally and absolutely Humble Person. For the sake of the fulfillment of spiritual needs, it is presupposed in faith that God exists, that He is the Infinite Knower and

Giver of truths. God contains within Himself eternal principles of truth that sustain us, and serve to guide us. He appreciates the value of truth infinitely more than any other person in existence. He wants to give truth to us, and will eternally struggle to help us live by it.

There is always the possibility that we may desecrate truth. Reflecting the teachings of Jesus, Christian writers repeatedly warn us that it is possible to commit blasphemy, to cynically or carelessly disrespect God's truth or goodness. Yet it seems a great paradox that many writers, who seriously beseech us to avoid blasphemy, nevertheless tell us that God is not subject to hurt by the irreverence of His children. Christian theologians traditionally have said that God is so powerful, wise, and immovable in His dignity that He is not really susceptible to harm done by us creaturely weaklings. If God is infinitely powerful and wise, then how could we ever really harm Him, lower His dignity, confuse or sorrow Him? If God is above frustration and sorrow, then how could we ever blaspheme Him Who is insusceptible to blasphemy? One cannot help but ask, What meaning at all is there to the orthodox notion of blasphemy?

If God cannot in any manner be hurt, then, accordingly, the notion of desecration of Him is meaningless. It is only the possibility that God *can* be sorrowed, that also human and other living beings can be sorrowed and crippled in spirit, that gives moral meaning to the principle of humility. The intrinsic goodness of God can never be affected by the irreverence of men. But if God gives us good truths, and if we can receive them and ignore them in the face of possible injury, then we cannot question the fact that there is such a thing as moral courage or moral merit. But if God faces no problems or risks in His concern for truthful living, and

if human beings by moral truths do not also face risks, then there is no such thing as moral courage or moral merit either in God or in man.

It can be shown plausibly that it is possible to sorrow God. When we act wrongly, think wrongly, and feel wrongly, we touch God's sensitivity to wrongness, and give Him anguish that we would act better, think better, and feel better. When our thinking or feeling is false or evil, God is moved with infinite concern to uplift us. For if He possessed no sensitivity to wrong, or if He were not affected by our wrongness, then it could not be explained how He could be concerned with our wrongness or rightness at all. There can be no concern with wrong where there is utter immunity to the effects of wrong.

A person may be immune to the disease of diphtheria. But he cannot be concerned with its evil effects in others, if he is not sorrowed by it, somehow hurt by it, if it is not in some real manner a personal problem for himself as it is for its victim. Surely he cannot suffer the personal symptoms of organic corruption if he does not carry the disease bacteria. But how can he sympathize with a sick person, or be morally concerned with helping him, if he does not in some real manner mutually share the sick person's suffering? There can be no sympathy where there is no moral concern. And there can be no moral concern where there is no mutual experience. By this, I should not want to imply that God is amenable to moral degeneration or to psychological disorganization. Altogether not, as it is God's infinite rationality and moral strength which make Him capable of enduring all evil. But there is no principle to show that there can be real understanding where there is no real sharing. That God can appreciate our sorrows without sharing them, or put

into us a sensitivity to wrongness without experiencing it Himself, quite plainly is implausible reasoning.

That we can sorrow God, or take away or add to His happiness, is the only thought that makes our relation to Him morally meaningful. Why should we be concerned with pleasing the Supreme Being, if we knew that we could in no manner please or displease Him, hurt or glorify Him? We must believe that it is possible to grieve God, if we are to have reason to believe that humility is a real virtue. If an infinitely conscious God did not exist to give virtue infinite carriage, then humility would have no more objective rightness or wrongness than cruelty and arrogance. If God were not the infinite guarantee of true moral distinctions, then all human moral conceptions would be mere illusions.

There is a singular need for humility in the study of the problem of creation. The problem of purpose in creation is the problem of problems. We take it that God's purpose in creating the world must be evident to some extent in the facts of the world; and our discovery of His purpose logically precedes the problem of how to conform to that purpose. If God has a purpose for us (which, *ipso facto*, is also His own purpose), then the solution of all our problems should be oriented with respect to discovering and executing that purpose. Men are free to deny or ignore the existence of a purposeful God; and they may create many problems whose solutions are amiss of fulfilling His purpose. Out of ignorance or malevolence of will, men may engross themselves in a search for solutions to vain problems. Our greatest problem is how to discern worthy from unworthy problems, or how to recognize problems and solutions that will help us to understand and fulfill God's purpose in creation. It can be shown that no problem has complete

meaning until this purpose is understood. Actually, for reasons which we shall consider throughout this work, the purpose of God can never be more than only partially understood. For we possess no principle that encompasses all principles, and every problem in our experience is meaningfully related to some other problem. One problem gives rise to another problem, which in turn leads to another, and then to another, to no conceivable end. To say that one problem has complete meaning while isolated from its origin out of other problems, or isolated from its relation to other problems, is to deny or overlook our experience of the continuity or interrelatedness of all things in nature. The solution of one problem has meaning only insofar as it contributes ultimately to the solution of other problems.

For reasons which we shall examine further throughout this work, it is not possible that we shall ever discover an end to our problems. God has problems eternally, and we shall eternally have ours. If God existed at one time as a perfectly complete being, free from all needs and problems, then it cannot be explained how a world of problems could ever have originated within His wholly un-problematical state of perfection.

Life seems to be basically an order of responses. Problems are a constant source of stimuli to keep living organisms alive. All problems could be removed only by removing all stimuli. Since life is a response to stimuli, if all problems were removed, then, *eo ipso*, there would no longer be any cause to life. If all stimuli ceased, then the only remaining response would be a response to the death of stimuli, which would mean death itself, or else sheer ennui, or the frustration of trying to solve the meaningless problem of having no problems to solve.

What happens to a man when he runs out of problems?

Of course he becomes phlegmatic, lethargic, and literally bored to distraction. Or else he becomes frustrated and restless, confused by the need for a meaningful problem, while not having a clear problem to orient his thinking and feeling. To escape this confusion or boredom, he then creates his own problems. He knows intuitively that he must have problems to live. Constantly having problems that are too difficult to solve, or having nothing but insoluble problems, would lead to insanity. But having no problems at all would lead to the grossest kind of insanity, or else to a state of boredom in which the will to live would completely die down. Man creates many of his own problems for a more dynamic and wholesome life. He needs to have something to do. He needs always to create. He needs some adventure, some insecurity, some problematical challenge to make his life interesting.

The concern of this work is to show the meaning of loneliness in the moral life of man and God. There could be no moral merit in a world without problems, risks, and the possibility of loss, suffering, and loneliness. Moral merit is something that exists only in the face of challenge. If there were never any problems, and no risk of loneliness and tragedy, then there could be no challenge.

Many people think wishfully that God will eventually solve all problems. The finis of problems for man will be his deliverance into an indefinitely perpetuated state of pure, actionless bliss. In such a state there will be no loneliness. There will be no possibility of suffering. There apparently will be no work; for work would mean having something to do, which is the same as having problems to solve. There will be no responsibility; for responsibility would mean facing certain risks, such as possible defeat, or suffering the consequences of doing something wrongly. If no such risks

were involved, then responsibility could not exist. Outside the possibility of doing something wrongly, and creating suffering because of it, responsibility can have no meaning.

As we shall see further ahead, it is not impossible that such a state of effortless bliss might at some time exist. But if it ever did exist, then there could be no moral merit within it. For as we have noted already, moral merit is not conceivable in any manner separated from responsibility. Without responsibility, a person could never experience moral love. Every psychologist worthy of mention, every philosopher and great religious leader in history has taught that true love is responsible love. Jesus taught that the maturest possible form of love is a love of self-sacrifice, self-restriction, and laboring care. We must love our enemies, pray for those who curse and persecute us, and do good to those who slander us—which is truly a challenge. Doing good to our enemies should eventually soften them. But that goodness will eventually soften any and every enemy is not a certainty—it is a challenge. There is no reason to assume that some persons are not capable of becoming indefinitely malevolent in disposition. The incorrigible ill will of the literary archangel, Lucifer, well symbolizes this possibility. We must love our enemies. But the injury and frustration which they can inflict on us stands forever in the face of moral courage. In a state of effortless bliss, without any moral courage in the face of risk, a person would exist in a condition empty of moral meaning. In such a state, the kind of love that was practiced by Jesus could never occur. The greatest love achieved in history, which stands as the pillar of glory to the caring heart, in such a state would lose its meaning. It is a wearisome paradox that great theologians, who have loved and worshipped God, have propagated the notion of heaven as this blissful state.

The truly loving person cherishes the greatest of ideals. The greatest ideal that we can imagine is a situation in which it is possible for persons to fructify and to live greatly. A person in heaven strives for moral greatness in his thought and feeling. Because God created other persons, and because the being of others is sustained by His Being, all persons are in heaven insofar as they have not distorted the purpose of their being. As the being and love of God is infinite, in Him the minds and hearts of all persons are capable of eternal growth. To the point that a man's mind and heart is pure, he is already in the Kingdom of God. Every man and child is there insofar as his heart is filled with love, his mind thinking out a responsible thought. In the Kingdom of God hearts have been softened, filled with tender regard for other persons. Minds have been straightened, filled with responsible will to do what is right.

When Jesus expounded moral meaning, He revealed a meaningful relation between God and man. In the freedom of the will to care, there is an intelligible relation between good and evil. There is a connection between the here-and-now and the great beyond. This connection does not mean that the problem of evil is solved. A good man will always wonder at the meaning of the possibility of evil. But his life is made meaningful by the moral principle of growth. Philosophers have perpetually sought the secret of life, or a complete reason for existence. But the pursuit of life within life is actually its own reason; and it is such a great, overwhelming reason that there can be no reason for the reason. Reason is a part of life, and is a function of life, but is not the cause of life. Life is before reason, is above reason, and is greater than reason. Life is its own end, and it will never stop. Every person can grow forever better. Everyone can go and go, achieving ever greater purity of mind and heart,

experiencing ever greater meaning in existence, and greater joy in loving creation. The possibilities of growth and creation can have no end.

People generally conceive of heaven in either one of two ways. In one way, they regard heaven as a restoration of the paradise on earth similar to that enjoyed by Adam and Eve before the Fall. In this common conception, there is a preponderance of materialistic thinking. Streets in this heaven would be paved with gold. Every person would live in a seemly home. Every home would have an inspiring garden. People would enjoy pure music and the fine arts. Every person would love his neighbors as much as himself. People would love God, as He would abide in their presence, apparently visiting from place to place. Or else He would abide in an established residence where people could visit Him at will.

There is nothing morally objectionable to this view of heaven, except that it is unmindful of many problems. Many Christian thinkers have taken it to task, not so much out of choiceness about heaven as out of honest critical thinking. Human spirits are accustomed to occupying bodies, living in houses, and traversing distances. There is nothing at fault in such a conception, so long as moral principles are not allayed in a paradise that is freed of responsibility. Real difficulties are encountered only when people try to place the Spirit of God in a body and localize Him. It has been written that man was made in the image of God. And from this many have inferred literally that it will be possible to visualize God in corporeal features. But Christian scholars generally have taken this scripture to a different effect, namely, to mean that God is within us. The Being of God sustains our being. We have inherited everything that is good in us from Him. All our potentiality for creating good

is inherited from Him. There are serious reasons, both moral and metaphysical, against the tendency to delineate God in too concrete and specific terms.

It is perhaps possible that God could incarnate His Spirit in an ideal brain and assume a locus of His personality in an ideal body. The historical figure of Jesus indicates the partial achievement of this already. But it is also possible that we are in error to assume that God would ever do such a thing. For He simply might never have a reason to do it. By any reason, the complexity of having Him do it before He sees fit to do it, or deems Himself able to do it, is morally dangerous, as it suggests manipulating God to our own image and plan. With our inferior notion of what is right and what is possible, we are in no position to describe the future condition of human spirits in terms of spatial relations. We need only believe that God will conserve our spirits beyond the death of our bodies. And we need have no further concern than moral concern.

The second common conception of heaven is the state of effortless ecstasy which we have noted previously. This conception is logically untenable for two chief reasons, one moral and the other metaphysical. If I may repeat an earlier comment, such a heaven would be morally meaningless, because it would be devoid of duty or responsibility. Also, many thinkers consider it impossible to show that the world in which we live, which is a world of constant change and creation, could ever have originated within an omnipotent and immutable being in which such a state of bliss is considered possible.

We live in a world of unceasing and universal change. It is difficult to understand that anyone could seriously question the fact of creation in this change. There has been creation as far into the past as we are able to see. There is

creation presently. There will be creation as far into the future as we are able to think. To be sure, there have been certain writers who have denied creation. But the manner in which they have denied it has been a betrayal of common sense. Considering the novelties that arise in the processes of change in life and nature, these writers have explained creation in terms of the mechanical laws of cause and effect, or else by the specious language of mathematical chance. They have failed to appreciate the nature of a real novelty. A rose flower is a true novelty. There are millions of roses, but no two roses are alike; and every rose has much about it that eludes the fathoming of mechanical laws. A rose is something more than the mere elements that make it up. It is something more than the assumptions of chemistry and physics that explain its growth. For physics and chemistry cannot explain the reality of a flower, nor the life of any living being. A chemical analysis of a flower leads only to a discovery of apparently lifeless elements. Physics and chemistry explain only physics and chemistry; they do not explain how any plant or animal can exist or live. A flower is a living being. A flower is a marvelous, enchanting, mysterious thing. It is something more than all the qualities which we can attribute to it. It is more than any hypothesis which we can conjure to explain its meaning and existence.

A poem, a painted picture, an utterance of heartfelt love is not only a novelty in the world of change; it is also a novelty of creation with meaningful purpose.

It is the element of purpose in creation that makes creation a problem. If there were never a purpose, then we could never purport to solve the problem of creation at all.

It is the problem of purpose in creation that calls for humility. God created man, and men create something of their own every day of their lives. Some of our creations are

beautiful and meaningful, but some are sordid, destructive, and chaotic. If evil or destructive things were never created, then there probably would never be any problem of the meaning of God in creation. In such case, we simply would believe in God without any doubt. We would accept and understand His goodness. We would understand His purpose in creation sufficiently to have no difficulty in following His will. But it is a manifest fact that we live in a world which contains natural evils. And as though natural evils were not enough, we freely create our own wrongs. It is the presence of evil in the world, both evils for which man is responsible and not responsible, that makes our thinking about a Creator God problematical.

It is generally believed that God created the universe and is immanent in it. God is ultimately responsible for everything that inheres or occurs in the world. He created man, and by way of implication He is in a certain sense responsible for all that we create, both good and evil, in spite of our freedom. No person whose conception of God is worthy can believe that He condones our evils. Set at naught is God to such, as our evils are His tribulations. That God created man capable of evil is vindicated by the moral nature of His Being. Still, believing in the goodness of God, as a person suffers evils that are not his due, causes some perplexity to his meekness of heart.

The mind must search critically to discover the purpose of God in creating a world that involves evil. The heart that craves humility must bear the trials and risks of the mind. It is not possible to be either truly meek or truly critical without being honest. There is no meekness in submitting to "truths" that are not convincing—there is only moral abjectness. Nor is there honesty in defending any view without first thinking it out. But the virtue of honesty is itself very complicated, as

we are naturally prone to rationalization of egotistical schemes and wishful thinking. Affected open-mindedness and impressive displays of logical technique in exposition may be only weapons for softening the resistance of unfavorable critics. Couching a view in logical terms may be only a sophisticated form of propaganda. For logic in itself can prove nothing. It is commonly understood that logic is only a technique for consistency in reasoning. In itself, logic is concerned with the truth of nothing. Logic is one thing, but facts are something else. If we have no facts in our reasoning, then we have no truths at all, whether or not our reasoning is consistent.

Ideally, logic is of value and facts are of value. A true philosophy of life would be a logically coherent interpretation of all the facts of our experience. Our greatest difficulty is not in learning to reason logically; but rather, it is in assessing the facts of life honestly, then achieving a rational interpretation of all those facts. Certain principles of reason are facts, and actually existing things are facts. But ideals are also facts, whether they are fulfilled or not; and needs and desires are facts. Psychologists, if not most philosophers, now consider needs and desires to be clues to understanding the nature of reality. It is now prose philosophy that the meaning of facts is a matter of valuation. A painted picture, a sunset may have different meaning or value than it has for another. The idea of the existence of God may have different meaning or value depending on one's purpose in contemplating God. Motives and desires have greater finality in philosophy than do logical and scientific reasoning.

It is probable that self-seeking is of greater significance in reality than are mere impersonal facts. Self-seeking certainly is the most common fact in experience, and a philosophy attempting to escape self-seeking would be a waste of

time. For no man can philosophize without seeking to do something, to create something, or to prove something. To seek a factual philosophy unaffected by the needs and desires of the self is extremely naive. The belief that we can achieve an ever greater love-knowledge union with God and our fellow man is the highest self-seeking which we can experience in life. Certainly we can never demonstrate to the unbeliever that the existence of a good God is a factual reality. But neither can the unbeliever demonstrate factually that God's existence is only a fiction in our minds. When a person says that he cannot believe in God, and asserts that evidence for His existence is inconclusive, then he is merely admitting that he does not care enough for God to believe in Him. Or if he seeks to prove that God does not exist, then he is not being honest if he will not admit that he seeks God's non-existence. He is deceiving himself, because an honest person does not seriously attempt to prove that which he does not want to prove. Belief in God rests primarily in a desire for Him, just as unbelief rests in a lack of desire for Him.

We cannot doubt that some people are opposed to the existence of God. Many persons not only believe that He does not exist, but they would hate Him if they knew He did exist. Some are blessed with healthy bodies and acute minds, and have never experienced the kind of suffering that naturally prompts a person to reflect on God's compassion. But even if the atheist deduces God's non-existence or non-goodness from the suffering of others, the suffering of others does not belie God's mercy. It solely reflects His limited power, and indicates an even greater than ever need for Him. The denial of the need for God is an affliction of the will in proud and rebellious self-seeking. Atheism is a will which is averse to the moral self-seeking of God. It is

a will which does not want God to exist. The writer once saw an atheist rap the table with his knuckles and declare, "I here and now categorically deny that any God exists! People create all gods in their imagination out of fear and conceit. The only cure for the longing after a God is to grow up emotionally."

The person who said this surely was in no mental or moral position to charge the religious person with fear and conceit. Every atheist this writer has ever known has attempted to rationalize his pessimism by calling it realism or courage. One atheist once declared to the writer: "You have not the courage to face the fact of death, so you invent this God to nurture a greedy desire to live forever."

The simple truth is that the desire to live forever is no more evidence of greed than is the desire to live for another moment. Modern psychiatry holds quite the contrary, that a lack of desire to continue living indefinitely is only evidence of moral and social sickness. No other mental condition is quite so morally morbid as that of the person who makes a cynical mockery of life while pretending to affirm it. Any man who cherishes life with his whole heart can never fall to the spiritual pikerism of ascribing the belief in death to moral courage. There is in fact not one iota of evidence that there is any such a thing as death. There is of course the disintegration of the organism; but the disappearance of sensory manifestations of the psyche certainly is no evidence that the psyche has been extinguished. However, since the atheist insists that there is death, we must meet him on his own grounds. No matter how lightly he takes it presently, his crisis day will come. There will be a day when he will lie flat on his back like a turtle, without one living being on the face of this earth who can help him. When he stares his death straight in the face, there will be only two alternatives.

Either he will turn to God, or he will face the fact that he is nothing.

But even then he need not care. God will twist nobody's arm. He will not force anybody to care for Him. It is a fateful fact of moral freedom that men may wrest themselves of their greatest spiritual needs. They may neglect to comply with their deepest moral needs, and become absorbed in vain self-seeking.

There is a kind of disbelief that merits sympathy. There are evils in the world that prompt some persons to utter social and moral desolation. Some persons experience frustration so consistently that the existence of a good God to them seems most highly improbable. Some have been always so mistreated, confused, and depressed that doubt is as natural to them as belief would be to a child in heaven. We must try to understand and relieve the stresses that prompt these persons to disbelief. But be this as it may, there can be no profit in supporting negative or futile forms of self-seeking. A renunciation of the highest aspirations of mankind can profit a man nothing. A hopeless conviction of the world's evils can cure no evils. We must believe that, as the Suffering Man taught, we can cure evil only with good. We can cure hopelessness only with hope. We can find God only by seeking God.

A person cannot aspire to God if he has never experienced the kind of love in which such aspiration is possible. Our only hope to prompt in others a seeking for God is to inspire in them this love. We must love generously and constantly. We must love with such kindness, help, and understanding, that the wrong self-seeker can have no chance to sustain his negative notion of goodness by our hypocrisies and wrong care. We must practice a care so godly that the unbeliever can seek to profit in sharing it.

Perhaps the chief reason there is so much doubt is the fraudulent morality of those who believe. That all persons who profess God really seek and love Him is believed by nobody. Christianity is filled with believers who do not know the meaning of the word sincerity, and who could not seek God consistently for even a day without feeling completely beside themselves and strange.

God created the world, and in His world there are deceitful believers, people in doubt, and people who desire definitely that He should not exist. A practical solution of the problem of creation should account for the world as it really is, as well as for what we aspire that it should be. In reflecting on the problem of purpose in creation, we reflect on God. There is always the possibility of moral error in our reflections, because it is possible that apparent honesty in the reflecting person may be only an unconscious form of egotistical scheming. But the person who is convinced of his own honesty can never know that he is dishonest until it is pointed out how his scheme of self-seeking is inconsistent in reason and inconsonant with his own needs. This is not to say that belief in God is sincere, while doubt is necessarily insincere. There is no reason why a person might not sincerely doubt the existence of God. Indeed, it is possible that anyone might experience life in such a shocking manner as to become confused in his thinking about God. But there is no sincerity where one will not admit that whether he believes or disbelieves depends on how much he wills or cares that God exists. At least the believer acknowledges the possibility of blasphemy through his egotism. The atheist is incapable of this acknowledgment, for he would have to consider God as real before he could logically regard blasphemy as possible. Once the atheist affirms that the existence of God is possible, it is no longer a question of whether he

can believe; it is a question of whether he *will* believe. If he *will not*, then we have no dispute with him. We can only veto his lack of care.

For a finite mind to reflect at all is to take a risk. As we reflect on God, we risk misconception and the possibility of blasphemy through an attempt to manipulate Him. But our courage to reason about God must be sustained by our faith in His understanding and forgiveness if our reason is wrong. An explanation of the risks in our thinking about Him can be found only in our thinking about Him. According to the atheists, such risks do not exist. But for us, submission to God can be achieved morally only through a faithful search for understanding of His purpose in creation. Only submission to plausible truths is moral. The proposition that God exists is an act of faith. But propositions about His nature must be acts of reason as well as faith, and the understanding of His purpose must be grounded in reason as well as in faith. There can be no thought at all about the purpose of God that does not involve propositions. The truth of a proposition lies in its correspondence with the facts of reality and experience. The atheist says that he has never experienced God, that he finds no evidence for Him in reality, and for this reason he cannot believe. But one wonders what kind of evidence could *ever* be convincing to the atheist. If the miracle of his own existence is not convincing, since it is subject to no explanation without God, then probably no argument however cogent could ever convince the person who wills never to be convinced.

As God is Infinite Being, He created nature out of Himself. The being of nature is sustained by His Being and *is* His Being. The laws of nature are the laws of His Being. Though God is not identical to nature only as we know it, but transcends our knowledge of nature, the principles

operating in nature are the principles of His reason. As we shall see further ahead, God would not create a world in which the laws of reason were incompatible with His own reason. God endowed us with a capacity to reason; and we can discover His purpose only by means of the power of reason which we have inherited from Him. Our propositions about the nature and purpose of God must correspond with the reason of God, as His reason is revealed in the laws of logic and the facts of life. As we grow in our understanding of the facts of life and the nature of correct reasoning, we get closer to the reasoning of God. Because of the finitude of human reason, we shall never have any logical system which is absolutely accurate, adequate, or final. But as we discover better and more comprehensive principles of reason, we arrive at richer truths and get closer to God. Our principles of reason are true insofar as they cohere with His reason. Our understanding of God's purpose in creation should grow with our increasing knowledge of the nature of the created world.

Christian theologians, as also the theologians of other religions, traditionally have assumed that there was a *first* act of creation. At a time in eternity, prior to the creation of the universe or the angels in heaven, there had never occurred any act of creation at all. God existed by Himself, had not yet created anything out of Himself, and was Infinite Being possessing exhaustive knowledge and power. In His completion and perfection, God was completely happy; and He bore no problems or needs.

It happens that many thinkers, both in old and in recent times, have detected tenets in this view that cannot be rationally maintained. It is not logically conceivable that a world filled with both good and evil, manifesting itself through a process of constant change and creation, could

ever have originated within an eternally changeless and satisfied being who had neither a need nor a duty to create other persons. In our study of nature and human nature, we find no evidence that a living being can act without either a need or a duty to act. No one has discovered a principle that explains how there could be a reason to create without first a need to create. The failure of the theologians of supernaturalism to explain the act of creation can be discovered in an analysis of their common argument. The case of the supernaturalist for creation may be stated generally like this:

It is true that we could not conceive how God could have a reason to create without also a need to create. But it is anthropomorphic conceit and close to blasphemy to assume that God cannot do something just because it seems impossible by human reason for Him to do it. We cannot really understand any act of creation at all, even our own acts. We know certainly that there is creation. We observe and participate in it very frequently in our lives. But we can only describe and acknowledge it; we cannot really understand it. We can compose a piece of music, or write a poem, and appreciate the beauty of what we have created. But our perception of what we have done, and our comprehension of the laws of nature involved in doing it, only in a very restricted sense give us an understanding of the act of creation. We do not understand fully what any object of creation is, in itself, or fully what it means. No composer ever has a full understanding of what he has composed. Nor does he ever fully understand what the act of creation is, fully what it involves, or fully what it means. For we can have only a partial experience of anything. We cannot ex-

perience wholly what anything really is in itself. We can experience feelings, ideas, and perceptions of physical objects; but we cannot experience fully what any idea, physical object, or feeling means. No idea in any finite mind can have the completion of meaning which it has to the Infinite Mind. Nor can any finite mind exhaust the meaning of any physical object. We may see that an apple is red, and we may touch it and taste it. But exactly what causes us to have these sensations of an apple we can never know. For there is more meaning to an apple than the finite mind can ever experience.

Our greatest experience is our awareness of our experience. But experience for a human being is very mysterious. No person can understand the ultimate why and wherefore, not even the how of his experience. Our awareness of our experience is descriptive. A description of something does not explain what the described thing wholly is or wholly what it means. Only God can understand fully what experience in itself is, and fully what it means.

Our principles of reason are descriptive principles. With our understanding of the laws of cause and effect we can describe what things necessarily will follow from prior things. We can describe what will happen to a piece of fragile glass if we drop it on a stone. We can state given principles of physics that necessarily will make it happen. But our laws of physics are only descriptions of what will necessarily happen if certain describable objects have a describable relation to certain other objects. What the perception of an object really is, how an object is possible, and what causes us to formulate principles about objects is not given in human understanding.

God creates all things as they are in themselves. He has exhaustive understanding of what everything in itself is, and what it means. God's principles of reason are not descriptive. He need not describe anything to Himself. Everything that exists is a part of His Being which He understands fully. God does not exist externally to things, observing them as though they existed outside Himself. God experiences fully what everything is in itself. His principles are principles complete within themselves. They are much more than just a description of what is possible or necessary if given things have a given relation to other things. God's experience of things in themselves is a complete experience. It is absolutely full experience, which lacks nothing and wonders at nothing. God's experience need not refer to other experiences in order to be meaningful. In God there is no prior or subsequent experience; there is only one complete, all-inclusive, eternal experience. No single human experience is meaningful except insofar as it is related to some other experience, which in turn has meaning only when it is related to some other experiences, and so on, to no determinable end. Paradoxically, God's experience is both infinite and complete. In fact, it may be said that God has no principles of experience at all. All seemingly separate or distinct principles must be logically interrelated in the formulation of one great principle in His mind. One complete principle may direct God's eternal, perfect, and infinite yet complete experience.

Human beings can never have a complete understanding of the nature of creation. What creation is in itself, and why and how it occurs, is understandable only unto God. We cannot understand how God can create without a need to create. But we must not substitute our

understanding for His understanding. God must create without a need to create, or else we cannot say that He is free from need. To say that God has needs, which is in effect saying that He has problems, is to say that He is not perfectly complete.

Now, I should like to reflect on the above interpretation of God's nature by borrowing a criticism that is commonly made by empirical writers. The supernatural view of creation is commendable for its reverence, and for its humility in assenting that God's understanding is infinitely above man's. But it seems to be very arbitrary in its distinction between naive and enlightened anthropomorphism. In Webster's dictionary, anthropomorphism is defined as giving human characteristics unto things that are not human. Which simply means, that anthropomorphic thinking about God is confinement to our human understanding about God. All human thinking is anthropomorphic, and no degree of sophistication can raise it above the character of being human. That any man with a special view can rationalize his contradictions by saying that they would not be contradictions in God's mind may well be the highest form of intellectual dishonesty. It is as though one would claim God's understanding without having God's stature. The only thinking which we can do about God is the thinking which we can do with our human minds. It is not possible for us to have a conception of God that is not entirely human. Any person who loves God, by believing in His supremacy, naturally presupposes that God's understanding is infinitely greater than ours. But if we are to say that we have inherited a capacity for true reasoning from God (however limited it might be), then our reasoning cannot be true except insofar as it coheres with His reason. To deny the meaning of man's rationality

by pitting it against God's thought is not to help an honest intellect discover God's purpose. What is really a true proposition for man must be also true for God, or else there is no meaningful connection between God's reason and man's reason. God has infinite truths that we have never discovered, indeed, that we shall never discover in all eternity. But if two and two make four on earth, and do not make four in God's mind, then there is something between God and man that makes a rational comprehension of His relation to us impossible. God gives us His truths, only some of them, verily, but enough that we can see Him and His children together without being blinded by rival principles.

In traditional thinking, a marked contradiction stands between the concept of infinity and the concept of completion. In the following chapter, we shall see that the meaning of loneliness can be discovered only in a proper understanding of the infinity of God. The attribution of completion to God negates His infinity, and weights the spirit of man with a meaningless loneliness that is incongruous with God's purpose. A perfectly complete being could never create. By virtue of the immutability which is ascribed to the complete person, he would be indisposed to change. He could change neither himself nor anything outside himself. For if he ever changed in any manner, then his undergoing a change would signify an original lack of completion in the order of his being or in the fulfillment of his purpose.

A state of change can never be derived from a changeless state. The fact that it cannot be done should orient our thinking on God's purpose in creation. There is only one moral alternative to the orthodox view of the nature of God as Creative Being. We must recognize the fact that loneliness is a part of God's eternal experience. If God had never been lonely, then never a child would have been created

that He might have someone to love. As change cannot begin in a changeless state, we must assume that there has been change forever. The principles of reason do not change in God. Nor does the depth of His love and goodness change. But the logical necessity of eternal change implies that a first act of creation is not possible, that God has been creating in an indefinite past. His principles of reason, power, and love have been applied in a creative past with no beginning.

The tremendous complexity of conceiving an infinite past does not keep it from being logically inevitable. Our experience of life verifies that something cannot come from nothing, and that change can come only out of change. To create at all, God never began to create. Our knowledge of what God has created of Himself is small indeed, but we have no reason to be disillusioned by our smallness. If we believe in God's eternal goodness, then we have only reason to be humble before His vast Being. In our seemingly terrible dependence and smallness, we have a reason to be deeply grateful that He sustains our lives. That God cares infinitely for every person, each as a seemingly infinitesimal role in His purpose, is a reason to love Him with all one's mind and heart.

The most crucial problem of creation has been the question of whether there will be an end to creativity. Some scientists have held that creativity will end when the universe's energy runs down, which will entail the end of history by the cessation of all action. Some scientists have considered the source of the universe's energy to be limited, and have denied the existence of a God who can regenerate its supposedly dissipating power. Citing the laws of thermodynamics, they have said that the universe will eventually grow cold and dormant, and only dead matter will remain, if anything at all remains. The absurdity of this view is

simply its failure to explain the original generation of the universe's energy. For obviously, if the universe's energy were dissipating, and if it were not being reconstituted, then the universe would have died uncountable aeons ago if it had never had a beginning. If it had not existed always, then it would not exist today. Contrary to this view, many scientists today (at least in the western world) consider the universe to be infinite, or at least that it was created out of God's Being and is sustained by His Being.

Others have said that creativity will end, that the plan of God will be complete, when all spirits unite with Him in a final state of changeless ecstasy. That a perfectly complete God once existed in such a state, yet projected Himself out of it, and is now striving to achieve it once again, seems to be a negligible paradox to the minds of these extravagant wishers. They have not dared to deal thoroughly with the problem of how such a state could be morally meritorious. It has been explained already that immutable bliss could never involve any moral virtue or moral love. When these writers are pursued for rationality, for an explanation of the meaning of such a state, they lose plausibility in exact proportion to their effort to uphold contradictions.

It has been assumed traditionally that effortless bliss should be the ultimate reward of moral greatness or moral compunction. That a life of struggle should continue forever, without ending in undisturbed tranquillity, seems to the traditional thinker to be an emotionally intolerable lack of appreciation of the frustrations, anxieties, and lonsomeness of struggle. It is understandable how easily frustrated and unhappy people might think in this manner. People usually think of heaven as pure, effortless peace when they are exhausted, weary of defeat, and in need of escape from misery. But people who have control of their problems, and

experience in hope some satisfaction in struggle, do not long for a cessation of action in living. They crave relief from frustration; but they long for change, and an active life of continued freedom to create. They need change to become something better.

Eternal morality is meaningless if the conditions of morality must at some time end. There is no moral greatness in believing that we shall inherit eternal bliss just for successful execution of moral duty during a brief sojourn on earth. Rather, there is moral greatness in the will to believe that moral greatness is its own reward for moral greatness. There can be no moral ecstasy where there is no pride in living right, where it is not possible to live wrongly. The joy of creative moral achievement is more appealing to great people than actionless bliss.

There is a simple contradiction in the manner in which traditionists use the word infinite. The word infinite means absolutely immeasurable and without limit. That God can be complete, yet experience no limit to Himself, is a contradiction in terms. For that which is complete cannot be infinite, except perhaps in duration in time. To say that God is complete is to place limits on His Being. It is to place a limit on the degree of moral achievement which is possible for Him. That God might possess infinite moral meaning, there should be no measure to the moral splendor which He experiences in eternity. If God is to love infinitely, then there must be no end or limit to the possibilities of the expression of His love. To love infinitely, God would create children infinitely. For every newborn child in His kingdom there would be an enhancement of the expression of His love. For if God stopped creating, if He committed a final act that closed the history of creation, then He would exhaust possibilities for His own love and creative greatness.

The principle of endlessness in creation has awesome moral implications. It means that not only God can create forever, but also we can create forever. The thought of eternal creation is abhorrent to a person only if he is morally sick. If a person has wholesome faith, moral strength, and creative will, then he can anticipate infinite possibilities in the enhancement of the joy of living. He can go to no measure, throughout an endless course of time, achieving ever more beautiful beauty, more loveful love, and greater greatness. Endless creation would mean ever greater accretion of responsibility of one person to others. But there is no joy greater than the moral joy of responsible love.

Regarding the problem of evil in creation, there is only one solution to it that is ultimately practical. God created a world in which evil is possible. There are evils in it which man has not created, and which are not his error. There are evils which are traceable beyond man, and they must be accounted for in a further study of the nature of God's Being. We shall attempt an explanation of this in the chapter that follows. Presently suffice it to say what every responsible person has said already, namely, that we can solve the world's evils only by eradicating them in action. It is not possible that we can ever completely understand evil, any more than it is possible that we can ever completely understand good. As a practical concern, good and evil are things for us to think, things to feel, and things to do. The good man takes action to create good. God created man capable of evil, freely disposed to evil. But that He created a world containing evils not ascribable to man does not justify a doubt of His goodness. It simply necessitates realism in the analysis of His power.

The concern of this work is to disclose the meaning of loneliness as a necessary aspect of moral experience. Loneli-

ness as a cause of depression, fear and boredom, we shall treat at some length further at hand. Presently, let us see that loneliness is essential to the act of creation.

A human being never creates anything, never seeks anything, never in any manner acts at all if he is not lonely. By lonely, I mean that he is incomplete, that there is something wrong with his being incomplete, whether he senses it consciously or not. Every person is an incomplete self. He does not, cannot find within himself all that he needs to have and be in order not to be lonely. If he were ever a complete self, then he could exist alone without being lonely. A complete person would never suffer any awareness of his aloneness, because he would have no need for anything outside himself to complete himself within. Neither would he suffer conflicting elements inside himself.

A newborn child apparently has no awareness or conception of himself as an existing person. Yet he knows organically if not consciously that his very existence depends on that which is outside himself. His sense of aloneness rises with the intensity of his needs, and subsides only when his mother's breast is put to his lips, when a blanket is placed over him to protect him from cold. As he touches and sees things about him, he soon learns that he is an existing self, that he exists apart from other persons and things. He learns his given name, but he does not know fully what he is, or how or why he is. The stunning, awful fact is *that* he is. He senses himself as a mysterious, incomplete being. His mother has become an urgent part of himself. Isolated in darkness, he cries for his mother, as fear of separation from his mother is a dread of separation from what is meaningful to himself. As he grows to manhood, his dependence on his mother grows less and less. Yet she continues to exist in his memory and conscience, and will forever remain a part of himself.

That he can live without others, or have meaning in himself unrelated to others, is manifestly impossible. He can never become a wholly autonomous being.

Because other persons are parts of himself, apart from others he would lose his own meaning. To grasp fully the meaning of himself, he would have to understand fully the meaning of others. Not possessing this understanding, he faces himself with apprehension. He does not always sense consciously that his existence depends on that which is outside himself. But any one of his actions, at any time, when closely analyzed reveals at least an organic appreciation of his incompleteness. Though he may not depend consciously on other persons immediately about him, he depends unconsciously on that which he cannot describe or understand. He is never completely intact in himself. He lacks complete purport in himself. He is insecure. He aims at completion. He needs that which is outside himself to complete himself within. He depends on The Infinite; and ineluctably, he must bear the loneliness of incompleteness that is essential to The Infinite. He may achieve an attitude of trust in that which is outside himself. He may have faith in God as the Controller of The Infinite. But in spite of this, faith only lessens the pain of his incompleteness; it does not negate it. Escape from the loneliness of incompleteness forever eludes his reach.

Because he depends on others and is lonely in his separation from others, he is given to the act of creation. No person can experience moral meaning apart from other persons. All acts of creation of the moral person are aimed at a more meaningful relation to others. In all eternity there has never existed a complete self. If any person were ever susceptible to completion, then he would become eventually separated in a morally meaningless state of unrelatedness to other

persons. If every person were complete in himself, then no person would ever feel alone or be lonely. But, *eo ipso*, all persons would be isolated in the greatest social paradox imaginable.

Only incomplete selves can exist. The self of a human being is incomplete for the understood reason that his being is finite. Or more precisely, the human being is incomplete because he transcends his own limits in unfulfilled longing. He reaches beyond himself. He always needs or desires to be something that he has not yet become. The Self of God is incomplete, because the Being of God is Infinite Being. Because God's Being surpasses all limits, He is not amenable to the terms of completion. Since God has created other persons, He is not alone. Yet He is separate from others, because He transcends the being of others in whom He is immanent. By endowing His children with free will, God divides His own Being, in order that others might possess free being and experience moral meaning. In creating free persons, God relates morally to others. In this relation, He negates His own completion. In His separateness from others, God is lonely. Because He has created always, He has always been lonely. To create and to sustain a moral order, God gives His Being to others, and commits the freedom of His will to others. God longs to fulfill the purpose of His will; and insomuch as His will is impeded and neglected by others, He is lonely.

That God can be lonely, and suffer eternally the presence of loneliness in His Being, implies a serious need for revision in our thinking about the nature of His reason. It is traditionally assumed that God does not reason at all. It is considered that God possesses exhaustive knowledge and power, which enable Him to solve all problems before they arise. In effect, such power means that there are never any

problems for God to solve. Reason in human beings is an instrument of purpose in the solving of problems, in the satisfying of disturbing needs. But since God is absolutely complete, He can have no needs, and consequently can have no cause to reason. It would be an anthropomorphic fallacy to attribute the need to reason to God's mind.

It may be concurred here that the assumption of God's exhaustive knowledge may arise from reverent motives. Howbeit, it can be shown that the orthodox conception of God's freedom from need contains logical errors. It can be shown that it is in keeping with the demands of logic, and the facts of our experience of life, to say that God is lonely. It can be shown that He has needs, that He has real problems to solve, that He experiences longing and is engrossed in struggle.

CHAPTER 4.

LONELINESS AND PERFECTION

Probably no idea has contributed more to the upliftment of humanity than has the idea of the perfection of God. When we seriously contemplate the perfection of God, we become more aware of the imperfection of ourselves. Possessing this awareness of our imperfection is the first requirement for our moral improvement. In fact, not possessing it is a sure guarantee of moral complacency or conceit. Notwithstanding, it often happens that we sense this need to improve ourselves, yet out of fear or laziness we neglect to act to ripen in character. The idea of God's perfection does not necessarily impel us to struggle to grow. Belief in God's perfect love should stir any person to enrich his own love. Indeed, the belief is valuable only insofar as it has this effect. But unfortunately, most persons who profess credence in this perfect love exert only mediocre effort to become more righteous. People draw on certain principles in the tradi-

tional conception of God's perfection to absolve themselves of poor effort to improve themselves. Ascribing omnipotence to God, they assume that, by an act of power equivalent to magic, God can perfect the believing soul who exerts little effort to perfect himself. If we did not believe in God, then we should have no inspiration to become like God. Christian moral theory demands that we struggle as much as possible to emulate the character of Jesus. However, it is a fact hardly subject to doubt that most Christians today are addicted to middling morality. We neglect to love our neighbors as much as ourselves; we trifle with the need to enrich our moral worth; and we have substituted the 50/50 proposition of modern ethics for the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice. In this chapter, I shall point out elements in the traditional conception of perfection that condone this common hypocrisy.

Traditional Christian metaphysical theory holds to God abstractly as the source of moral values, but, in effect, it denies a meaningful participation of God in the real world of moral struggle. Traditional thought nurtures a contradiction between a complete God, Who is inactive in eternity, and an incomplete God, Who is active in time. A rival logic has been created between the morality of God and the reason of God. Traditionists have assumed that God's reasoning is perfectly complete. Or more precisely, they have considered it an error to say that God reasons at all. For since God's knowledge is considered exhaustive, He can have no cause to reason. If God's power and knowledge are exhaustive, then it is not possible that He can have any problems. Problems can exist only for persons who have needs; and a problem is a problem as such only to creatures. God has no characteristics of the creature, because He has no needs that face obstruction to their satisfaction. Exhaus-

tive power and knowledge can face no obstructions. God knows in advance all that will ever happen in time. He knows exactly everything that should be done; and He knows with certainty that He will do it. Or to be more accurate, God has already done all that must be done, because all the events of time have already transpired in eternity. There is no history to the exhaustive knowledge of God. In eternity, God knows all that will occur in time before it ever occurs. For God, eternity is an immutable now, in which the past and the future inhere in the now. To apply the principle of immutability to God is to say that His consciousness is fixed and insusceptible to change. It is to say that in His mind nothing ever really happens. For change is the very essence of happening. If there are no changes in God's thought and being, and if He is all-inclusive being, then there can be no happening.

It is said that God has no needs. His needs are completely fulfilled in eternity; and God *is* eternity. The satisfaction of any real need involves change. It involves a change or a reduction in the need itself. The satisfaction of the need for power and knowledge, and the need for freedom of expression creates changes in the needs themselves, and changes the very nature of the being who needs. If God's power, knowledge, and freedom of self-expression were complete, then it would be true that he could have no needs.

But the simple truth is, we cannot logically conceive of this God without needs. A person who has no needs can have no moral meaning for other persons. Our problems are real. Our need to satisfy our hunger is real. We need to overcome our ignorance and enmities. We need greater love and happiness, and salvation from pain, confusion, and fear. There could be no moral relation between a completely

satisfied God and His forever longing, unsatisfied children. If God were completely satisfied, then He would be satisfied with our dissatisfactions. He could have no concern for our mental or moral conditions either one way or another. For in such a God (the all-inclusive Being) there would be a contradiction between the point of view of the infinitely satisfied and the point of view of the infinitely longing.

Theologians traditionally have characterized God with omnipresence. God's Being is Infinite Being. Transcending all things, God yet *is* all things. All things are a part of God. Nothing exists outside His domain of Being; and He is completely perfect Being.

But empirical writers have pointed out that if God were perfectly complete, then, reasoning logically, no imperfection could possibly exist. For an imperfection could not adhere within pure perfection, and an imperfect part within a perfect whole could not subsist. This would entail a contradiction between the notion of the part and the notion of the whole.

We have no knowledge of perfection. We have only knowledge of imperfect things. There is no perfect thing in nature or in human nature. There is no thing that is not continually changing. By the definition of perfection, a perfect thing would be a complete thing. It would be a thing insusceptible either to improvement or to degeneration in change. For if it changed at all, then it would never have been perfectly complete in the first place. A perfectly complete person could never commit himself to a world of change, because he would be insusceptible to a meaningful involvement in a relation to incomplete and changing things. A meaningful awareness of change is a participation in change; it is the presence of change within the person who is aware of change.

Everything in our world is constantly changing. Our perceptions and insights change. Our physical being and welfare change. Our art and love change. Our conception of perfection as changeless completion is an attempt to know something that is not really knowable. It is an effort to define something not really definable, to imagine something not really imaginable. Our thought is imperfect, yet we have spoken of perfection as though we know what perfection is, *that* it is, without knowing that we have not really understood what we have talked about. Our thought about perfection is an abstraction about something that cannot really be abstracted. There is nothing in nature from which we can deduce perfection. Yet we have deduced it, unaware that what we have deduced is highly ambiguous. Theologians and artists have used the term "perfection" as though the word represents something that is known in reality. The word has immense practical significance, while it is defined as the highest possible degree of excellence in quality. We naturally think in terms of improvement. Musicians seek finer quality in tones; painters strive for purer impressions; and philosophers search for purer thought. So that, practically, perfection means "purer," "finer," and "better," while aiming at "the purest," "the finest," and "the best."

Yet artists and craftsmen cannot conceive of perfection as something that is ultimate in itself. Real artists die seeking purer art. But they are concerned with perpetual improvement, not with composing "the piece," painting "the picture," or writing "the poem." The best of all possible stories could be written only once; and if an artist once wrote it, then as a creative artist he would die. For the very essence of the creative person is his will to create. If he once succeeded in writing the perfect story, the best of all possible stories, then thereafter he could perform again only in an

inferior manner. An artist cannot aim at perfection, then achieve it, and thereafter be satisfied with inferior performances. After having achieved perfection, his only possible satisfaction would be the pride of having exhausted possibilities. His great story would be a standard; but never again could he achieve even his own standard. Having found perfection, he could gain nothing from it but the encumbrance of himself. As a creator, he would fall from his own standard in creative defeat.

We have no principle to explain life in terms of perfection. In fact, that we admit that we have no knowledge of perfection is an intellectual and moral necessity. To have a certain knowledge of perfection, we should ourselves have to be perfect. We should have to possess a perfectly complete understanding of all things. Which of course we do not, as our understanding is a perception and interpretation of given things related to other things. To be very exact, we have no knowledge that a complete or definite thing even exists. Everything which we comprehend is a thing that is changing. True principles of reason do not change; but the things to which they refer or apply are constantly changing. Every principle of reason is in itself meaningless, except insofar as it relates to other principles and to changing things. No human being, no form of life, no inorganic thing in nature is ever the same thing for two consecutive instants. Or at least, referring to the ultimate units of the physical world, even if they do not change in essence, their relations to other things change with every instant. In fact, there are no irreducible instants in time; and we can never observe anything in a definite instant. Which means, that we have no knowledge of a complete or definite thing at all.

To deduce perfection from nature is as ambiguous as to deduce life from death or something from nothing. No per-

son who ever believed in perfection has been able to define it in a meaningful manner. Webster's dictionary defines it as the highest possible degree of excellence in quality. But no man can apprehend such excellence, or show that it is possible to exhaust the possibilities of excellence. The traditional conception of perfection has failed to realize that to exhaust the possibilities of excellence would be to place a limit on the degrees of excellence, which would contradict the infinite greatness of God's thought and love. The degrees of excellence in God's Being must be subject to no limit or completion. Or else we cannot speak of His infinite greatness in an intelligible manner.

At this point, it will be profitable to treat of the psychological origin of "perfection" as a deceptive word. Every human being is an incomplete and imperfect person. No person can exist without being aware of his incompleteness and imperfection. If he does not sense it consciously, then he senses it unconsciously, because of an imperative realization that his existence depends on something other than himself. As soon as a person acquires the use of adequate language, he is able to describe the incompleteness of himself and others. At a time in history, some person invented the word "perfection" to denote simply and generally all the things that he needed to have, but did not have, and all the things that he needed to be, but in character was not. He had no final knowledge of exactly what he should possess or become in order to be complete. But he knew that he needed to acquire and to become many things, and knew that he needed to have and be much more than he knew how to have and to be. He knew that he was always in need. Because of the frustration, suffering, and loneliness that accompanies a condition of need, his emotions moved him to think of a final satisfaction of all his needs. He invented the

word "perfection" to convey this notion of final satisfaction.

That men can verbalize impossible things, and believe that they are real, is old knowledge. Unhappy and frustrated persons think negatively of their incompleteness, and are apt to create the illusion of a final completion to alleviate the pain of unsatisfied longing. There are no facts in nature and no principles of reason to show that a state of incompleteness necessarily implies the possibility of a state of completion. It is not logically possible to substantiate the notion that imperfection implies perfection. I once discussed this question with a person who said that completion is as necessary to incompleteness as light is to darkness. Such a notion entails the proposition that nothing can exist without its opposite. Or at least, a thing should eventually become its opposite. But it cannot be explained how opposites could ever come about, if there were a negation of their cause before they even began. If everything necessitated its opposite, then rational thought would be impossible. For this would imply that the existence of God would necessitate His non-existence, which is simply absurd. Nor can it be explained how a complete and changeless being could ever be responsible for incompleteness and change. If a complete person were to become involved in incompleteness, then it follows that he would experience incompleteness within himself. A meaningful awareness of incompleteness would entail his participation within incompleteness. A complete or immutable person could never act to influence the change in changing things. For the very fact of such an act would indicate the presence of purpose. Purpose is meaningless if it is not an aim to achieve that which has not yet been achieved. God's commitment to action in creation is an involvement in unfulfilled purpose. Either God acts or He does not act. If He acts with purpose, then He is involved in a need to fulfill His purpose. That His

purpose were fulfilled in eternity, yet not fulfilled in time, would be an expression of His Being in contradictory form. For He would be active in time, yet inactive in a condition immune to time.

The word "eternity" originally had meaning. It denoted the endless process of change or the duration of time. The Being of God endures forever. But eternity has become an equivocal term, as philosophers have attempted to substitute illusions of abstraction for the pains of reality. Time is the medium of events that occur in change. To escape the loneliness of incompleteness in a world of change, men have projected in their imaginations an ultimate existence that would negate the reality of time. If God were to negate the fact of change, and destroy the past and future of man's experience in time, then it would be true that there could be no time. But it would also be true that our experience of time is unreal, and that the infinite creativity of God is unreal. We must believe that in the mind of God there is a consciousness of the loneliness of man. The reality of man's suffering in time is real to God. His consciousness of our loneliness is a participation in our loneliness. If He does not in some real manner share our loneliness, then it is a tragic fact that He is not morally related to us.

The notion of completion is rooted in pathological emotions. It is a false notion. It arises out of negative feelings about dissatisfaction, out of an unlifelike wish to end all needs. It is a wish to escape the effort of laboring a moral purpose that will endure forever. In ascribing completion to God, men anticipate deliverance into a blissful state that is freed of the pains of moral care. To hold such a belief seriously, with emotional depth, can have nothing but harmful effects on a person's character. From the traditional

notion of perfection follows naturally the expectation of eventual escape from morality. For the traditional conception of perfection is precisely a version of a condition in which the loneliness and pain of moral care do not exist. Men commonly live with the fanciful faith that they will be lifted into this condition, in spite of the fact that they realize that it is not their due. A faith that is sustained by fancy conduces to sloven morals, to very little care for the suffering of God. It kills incentive to improve the self, to labor the spirit to a greater love for God.

The conception of perfection as completion contradicts the fact of change in life, and belittles the necessity of a willingness to strive and grow in living. Men do not need to find an end to all their needs. They need greater degrees of satisfaction; but they do not need an end to creative freedom. A person with a healthy mind does not seek an end to all his needs. If he affirms life, and aspires to live greatly and create better things, then he cannot hold to a conception of perfection in these unwholesome terms. Instead of fancifully negating the ultimate necessity of striving, he loves to strive. Instead of a meaningless condition of static bliss, heaven to him is an open world of creative, moral living. It is a world in which the possibilities of creative greatness can know no end.

It would not be sensible to altogether discard the use of the word perfection. It is a superlative word that has beautiful value for praising the achievement of a person who has done his best. To tell a person that he has done his work perfectly is to express how greatly we appreciate his talent and effort. But it is not possible that any task can be done to perfection. A student may score a mark of a hundred as the highest possible grade on a test. But there is no test

that can perfectly measure skill and knowledge; and no person's understanding of the material in a test is perfect. No person's knowledge or power of learning is perfect.

Aside from a practical use of the word, perfection has no intelligible meaning. Nor can the word "perfectibility" have meaning. For if perfection is not possible, then to say that something is aimed at it is to propagate an illusion. Like perfection, perfectibility has much value as a practical word; but it can have no place in philosophical formality. It is a loss in rhetorical beauty, but in the formality of metaphysics we must substitute the word "improvement" for the word perfectibility. We cannot perfect anything at all; but we can attempt to improve everything. We experience improvement in reality. We think in terms of improvement. We make improvements. Improvement is an observable result of our daily labors.

It cannot be questioned that we experience degrees of excellence in the things of life. All human beings and all things in nature are subject to dissolution or improvement in change. Since the facts of nature and the principles of reason necessitate a positive attitude of creative living, improvement of the world and ourselves is the only principle that makes life meaningful. It is the greatest and most practical principle in life, and it tells us much about the purpose of God.

God is engrossed in an infinite action of improvement. God is unsatisfied with the moral conditions of the children He created. There are not enough children in His kingdom of children. Many who now exist are depressed, insane, and alienated from themselves and others. God wants to purify the hearts of the bitter, and cure the bodies of those who suffer. For every being who suffers, God also suffers. He wants to create more children to care for and to love. For

every child who experiences creative joy, love of beauty, and moral courage, there is an enhancement of God's happiness. When a child loves God, He takes joy. He is lonely for us when we do not love Him. Because of His infinite care for us, as we are lonely, He is lonely. It is not a paradox that God's Spirit is so great, yet can be so affected by such inklings as we. Indeed, God's greatness consists in the fact of this care. God's careful mind reaches where all other minds put together can never reach. That He can be within all men, yet transcend men and reflect on men, is so concretely difficult to comprehend that only an act of faith can tend it. Yet it contradicts no principle of reason. It uplifts every heart that loves Him. It is the only principle that makes Him meaningful to man.

It has been commonly assumed that God's power is unlimited. That His power endures infinitely in time is a rational thought. However, critical thinkers have shown that a Moral God unlimited in power cannot be conceived except in absurdity. They have pointed out that if God had possessed unlimited power, then He could have overcome all evil at the start of creation. But existing evils make it clear that God did not do this. Either God has had the power to destroy all evil, but has lacked the desire, or else He has had the desire, but has lacked the power. To say that He has not had the desire to destroy all evil would appear to many thinkers to contradict His goodness. Traditionists have argued that God is both able and willing to destroy all evil, but that He has not yet seen fit to do it, because of certain valuable insights in His infinitely wise plan. Others have argued that the reluctance of God to destroy any evil would belie His goodness.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the knowledge and power of God must cohere with the moral nature of His

purpose, or else there are inconsistencies in His personality. It is very probable that God could not possess unrestricted knowledge without also possessing unrestricted power. For such knowledge would show Him how to possess all the power He desired. Nor could He be infinitely powerful without also possessing unrestricted knowledge. For such power would enable Him to surpass all restrictions on His knowledge. But the moral person is concerned to believe in the goodness of God; and he must interpret God's goodness in terms of His moral nature. God could not be both infinitely moral and infinitely powerful; for infinite power would include an ability to overcome morality. An ability to do this would contradict God's moral goodness, or at least His goodness would impose certain restrictions on His power. Otherwise, a good God unlimited in power would have created His children incapable of evil or error. He would have placed them in a perfect world at the beginning of their existence. He would have subjected them to no temptations, to no trials on earth, or to no possibility of moral defeat. If all imaginable things were possible to God, then He could have created man capable of enjoying beauty, but not capable of doing evil.

Many moralists remind us frequently that there is no moral virtue in the worship of bald power. There is no value in knowledge except when knowledge is applied to good ends. The principle of God's power and knowledge must conform to the moral purpose of His will. If He could have created persons free to do good but not free to sin, then He surely would have done so. If He could have created a free will insusceptible to evil, then from the assumption of His goodness it follows that He would have done it. But the moral freedom, struggle, and loneliness that we experience in life indicate that God could not do this. He could not do

it, because a free will without liberty to sin would be a contradiction, and a rational God could not will it. God could not destroy all the possibilities of evil, because to do so would involve converting His order into a non-moral order, which would contradict His moral reason and will. If we are to believe in the infinite moral goodness of God's will, then the facts of life require that we understand that His power is limited. God is creating now. He will continue to create all the good that He possibly can. God uses His power exhaustively, in keeping with good ends. There are endless possibilities within Him; but they are possibilities restricted to His moral purpose. God struggles eternally to improve His moral order. In His acts of creation, in a very real sense God fructifies and enriches Himself. As He creates more beauty, and loves the beautiful creation of His children, His own realization of beauty grows. His awe grows, as He takes joy in His creative, moral achievements.

God can create no person incapable of sin. Every person who ever lives must live in a moral order. He will be free to sin or to defy his moral order, because God's moral will negates His power to create a free being above the possibility of sin. God did not begin Himself, and He can never create another like Himself. Only His will is above moral evil. His purpose is guided eternally by a will that is indisposed to do moral evil. It is the moral goodness of God that is immutable. His loving kindness and generosity are insusceptible to degeneration, insusceptible to measure. Yet, God cannot create any person without subjecting him to moral meaning. Because He loves His children, and is infinitely responsible for their well-being, He needs and deserves their love in return, and makes them responsible to Him.

The existence of certain evils in nature, for which no man is morally responsible, creates the critical problem of ac-

counting for the source of evils that arise outside the free will of men. We observe constitutionally amoral persons in nature who are incapable of rational or responsible thinking. There are famines, "acts of God," and diseases that cause untold suffering in human beings and in lower animals. We inherit ignorance at birth, a state in which moral responsibility is impossible; and there is no end to the evils that arise from the errors of unwilling ignorance. God's moral sharing of the life of men implies that not only men suffer these evils, but also God suffers them.

It is the awareness of evils not ascribable to man's will that provokes men to question the nature of God. If it were a known fact that men were the sole causes of suffering in the world, then it would not be likely that any person would ever question God's compassion. But the fact of death and the frequent affliction of the righteous in pain are realities that burden the reason of even the most deeply faithful. No person who believes in God's infinite mercy can say that He would enjoy inflicting suffering on His children. Infinite benevolence is essentially a part of the goodness of God; and to ascribe any evils to His will would appear to some thinkers to be charging Him with cruelty. Still, belief in the moral ground of the world leaves no alternative but to account ultimately for the source of all evil in terms of the moral nature of God's will.

The traditional conception of God's perfection fails to appreciate the most essential characteristic of God as a Moral Person. God is free. God is the source of moral meaning, because His will is infinitely moral, and His goodness is the consequence of a will that is morally free. God is not an automaton which does good mechanically. He struggles to control counter-proclivities within Himself, as He could do infinite evil if He did not constrain Himself by acts of moral

will. Otherwise, God would be a mechanism to which no moral merit could be ascribed. No man could worship the Supreme Being as a Person, if God lacked the moral meaning and purport of a person. People can respect sheer, impersonal force, whether it is a force that is for good or for evil. But no man can have a heart full of reverence for a mechanism that is devoid of personal moral meaning. Since God wills to be moral, He could never negate the possibility of evil without also negating His own freedom and moral meaning.

God is infinitely good, because He wills eternally to do and to be good. But His power for self-expression is divided within Himself between proclivities to evil and His will to constrain Himself from evil. God wills to do infinite good. He wills infinitely to control His Infinite Being. But within His Being is a division of power in counter-proclivities which inevitably restrict His power to do good. God is Infinite Being; but He does not hold absolute control of His Infinite Being. The infinite goodness of His will is the source of all good that all persons and living beings might enjoy. But His will is moral; and because it is moral, His power to do good is limited. His power to negate the eternal fact of evil is limited.

In the life of every normal person there is a minute pattern of the problem of God. Every person bears within himself proclivities to evil that contradict his will. He bears tendencies that if given rein would make his existence inane, chaotic, and meaningless. In the struggle to control opposing forces within his being, a person experiences moral meaning. If he did not bear within himself a division of forces, then he could never be a moral person. Within himself is the source of his good and evil. His control of proclivities to evil within himself is his moral merit. If he could

vanquish all tendencies to evil within himself, then he would become a very good person; but he could no longer be a moral person, because moral meaning consists in self-struggle. The saint who does no harm to others, in a state of isolation from others, may enjoy the good of communion with God. Yet he is given to immorality, in his sin of omission of effort to help other persons overcome the evil in themselves. Struggle to overcome evil in others is morally identical to struggle in oneself. By this, I mean that each of us has an obligation to struggle to destroy evil, no matter what or in whom may be the source of evil. One is responsible for others, not only for oneself. Attachment to God in a state of isolation from others is selfish. If God had desired such attachment, then he would have created us good but not capable of morality. Self-struggle is the essence of existence as a moral self. To say that God could create moral persons without being moral Himself is absurd.

All evils in the world against the will of man are the consequences of actions of counter-forces in God and man not yet subdued. Men should never complain of death, of the tragic effects of cataclysms of nature, or of the afflictions of the righteous. We must be grateful that the will of God is moral, that His will to do good controls evil as much as possible in keeping with His moral nature. We should approach the Lonely Man on the Cross, and ask ourselves if we have suffered what He has suffered. We should remember Jesus' affirmation of faith, that, "he that endureth to the end shall be saved." We must believe that, in the due course of His struggle, God can redeem that which is lost. He can relieve the pain of those who suffer.

— The traditional conception of God as complete being fails to account rationally for the possibility that He can create

and love. To say that God creates and loves is to enhance the moral meaning of oneself through the ideal of faith in Him. But to say that He creates for the sake of creation, and loves for the sake of love, is merely to state tautologically that He is able and willing to create and to love. It does not explain why it is possible that God can act at all. Nor does it explain how God can have needs or how He can act to satisfy His needs. Traditional thought has assumed that God contains within Himself a complete reason for His existence. He knows that He exists, and knows precisely why and how it is possible that He can exist. His existence is sustained by His own understanding about the possibilities of His own existence. Indeed, it is said that we have postulated the existence of God with the express purpose of showing that what is not explainable to us is nevertheless understood in His mind. God has no unanswered questions about His Being. When the Supreme Person faces Himself, He experiences no mystery. It is generally considered that to question the completion of God's understanding of Himself is to admit to ultimate irrationality or meaninglessness in His Being.

However, if the reasoning heretofore in this work has been correct, then it can be shown that God experiences mystery and awe within Himself. Earlier in this work it was substantiated that a complete person is logically impossible, or at least that he could have no moral relation to other selves. It was shown that incomplete and changing selves could not subsist as parts of a changeless and perfectly complete person. The completion of God is negated by the Infinity of His Being, and by the moral nature of His Being. That God can experience His own incompleteness without wonder and mystery cannot be logically conceived. Incom-

pletion of being implies incompletion of self-containment, incompletion of self-control, and incompletion of self-awareness. Since the consciousness of God is infinite, *eo ipso* His consciousness is incomplete. Since His knowledge and self-awareness is infinite, He can reach no end to the meaning and being of Himself. Because there is a division of power in the counter-proclivities of His Moral Being, the knowledge of God to negate evil is restricted by power. But the fact that His knowledge is restricted by power does not mean that it is restricted in meaning. In the infinite knowledge of God there can be no exhaustion of meaning.

From the infinity of God's knowledge follows necessarily the fact that no single principle can exist in His mind to explain all things. Such a principle, which would encompass all possible principles, cannot logically be attributed to an incomplete self. Instead of thinking in His mind one eternally complete thought, it is more logical to assume that God reasons eternally with endless principles. If God's knowledge is infinite, then in the infinity of His thought He experiences no end to His principles. There is nothing superior to God. Yet, at His own greatness by His own consciousness of His own Infinite Being, God experiences mystery and awe.

There is not a secret of life. There is not a final, complete reason for existence. In reality, there can never be a negation of life's mystery.

How strange this seems.

Yet, how real is the mystery of life!

It must be that every trail of reasoning, even in God's mind, eventually resolves in mystery, as there is no end to God's thought. In every newly discovered principle of life we find the possibility and necessity of discovering previously unanticipated principles without any conceivable

limit. Our investigations of the facts of nature produce more questions than we are able to answer. For every problem that we have been able to solve, many have arisen that remain unsolved. Instead of moving closer to the secret of life, we are moving farther from it with every new thing that we learn. Instead of growing simpler, the world is growing more complex to understand.

The apparent inexhaustibility of principles betokens the probability that knowledge is not susceptible to an end or completion. The knowledge of God does not focus inwardly upon a single principle that limits His meaning. Rather, it expounds in all directions to no end. God's principles of reason are not united by a single reason that encompasses the multiplicity of reasons. In God, reason has order, but not the static order of a dissolution of all principles into a single principle. The unifying principle in God is His love, and His will to order, which is a passion that is superior to reason and beyond reason. God conceives no end to His own knowledge and being. God is conscious of His Infinite Being, but He never realizes Himself wholly, because there is no possibility of an end to His self-realization. God not only transcends His children; He transcends Himself. He stands in awe of His own standing. The facts of life and the laws of causality show that something cannot come from nothing. God did not create the world out of nothing. He created it out of Himself. The infinite novelties of creation within His Being imply an inexhaustibility in the aspects of His Being. If the aspects of God's Being are inexhaustible, then how could there ever exist an exhaustive understanding? Logically, there could not. For before exhaustive understanding could ensue, the totality of meaningful things should of necessity be exhaustible. But since God can measure no end

to His creative greatness in eternity, nor measure any limit to His self-realization, there can be no principle that entails an end to His understanding.

There are two things that make it possible for God to act. Firstly, the Supreme Person exists mysteriously to Himself. Secondly, God is a Lonely Person. He is lonely for all that He can possibly realize, yet can never realize, because there is no completion of His self-realization in eternity. He is lonely for all that He can possibly create, but has not yet created. He is lonely to love and to be loved by the children of His future. He is lonely for those who now exist and do not love Him. He is lonely to redeem the lost, to reap the harvest that He has sown infinitely in the past and will sow in eternity. God is lonely to exalt the hearts of all His children.

Mystery and loneliness make it possible for a person to act. If a person did not long to be what he has not yet become, or long to preserve what he now holds in need, then he could have no consciousness of the meaning of an act. If a man did not experience wonder and mystery, then his life would be tantamount to the hebetude of a machine. Such a person could never create good. Nor could he ever love. He could have no adventure, no sentiment, and no veneration. Only a person with needs can reason; and only wonder and loneliness can stir reason to the achievement of moral joy. The person who experiences no wonder can act only in blindness. He is nothing to himself. He is indifferent and unfeeling. The person who knows no awe is unaffected and unmoved. He can enjoy no love. He can act no love. He can know no delight. If he reasons at all, then his thought is aimed neither at discovery, nor at creation, nor at the enhancement of his moral worth and meaning. His

thought is only a means to express fatuous or biological urges.

The unfortunate person who has inherited no capacity to wonder subsists in a meaningless, amoral, and fruitless existence. He possesses no awareness of his own loneliness, and no wonder at what he might become if he had the power to become. But his lack of awareness of his privation does not change the fact of his privation, or the fact of loneliness that inheres in his privation. The person who knows no wonder is saved from much pain of longing, but he nevertheless is an incomplete self. He cannot act to fructify in the loneliness of his incomplete being. He cannot grow, and cannot even desire to grow. He cannot become what he ought to be but has never been able to become. The fact that he is not psychologically lonesome does not negate the fact that he is metaphysically lonely. He cannot even long to become what every person should eventually be able to become. He misses all the fruits of life. His privation is a metaphysical reality; it is a metaphysical tragedy.

Fortunate persons who have inherited the capacity to wonder, and to appreciate the mystery of existence, may be stirred by awe to acquire the meaning and fruits of life. Mystery disposes a person to inquire into life's meaning. It moves one to discover knowledge, to create the fruits of life that are made possible by knowledge. It is only in mystery and loneliness that the urge to discover can subsist. But unfortunately, it is a fateful fact of moral freedom that a person may blind himself to life's mystery, and willfully benumb his awareness of his loneliness in privation. Because of the painfulness of effort of improving himself in incompleteness, a man may close the doors of his mind to the tribulations of moral and intellectual care. He may fixate himself

willfully in a level of loneliness that is unproductive. In moral complacency, he may desensitize himself to the pain and meaning of his own privation. He may deny that he is lonely. He may protest the moral meaning of loneliness. He may abandon his growth. Either out of malevolence, or moral torpidity, or a lack of courage to act, he may enclose the mystery of life in a coffin, and lock the lid, and throw away the key.

CHAPTER 5.

LONELINESS AND POWER

At the beginning of this work, I stated that loneliness is that which is before all else. Standing unqualified, this remark is unintelligible, for loneliness is meaningful only insofar as there is a lonely being. Only a being can be lonely, and without being there could never be any loneliness at all. If there were infinite nothingness, or if there were never any being or beings, then there could never be any notion of loneliness; and for this reason, loneliness as something in itself would be meaningless. I have heretofore spoken of loneliness as though it is something really existing, and a clarification is now in order.

We can define loneliness meaningfully only in terms of the possibilities of being. If there were universal nothingness, or if no being had ever existed with the possibility to become something that it has not yet become, then not even loneliness could ever be, nor could any being ever come

into existence to be lonely. For loneliness to be something in itself, and in order that we may speak of it in a meaningful manner, loneliness must be something real. Since I declared that loneliness is the cause of life, and is the power behind action, we need now to consider loneliness as a characteristic of power.

Again, if there were universal nothingness, then there could never be any being with the power to become something that it has not yet become. We might say that if there were universal nothingness, then there would be universal loneliness. But in this case, our talk would be meaningless, because there would be no being, and hence no loneliness as something meaningful to some being. Since only being has the possibility to become something that it has yet to be, we now define loneliness as the power of any being to become what it has not yet become. To the extent that any being has yet to become what it is possible for him to be, a being is lonely. However, this does not mean that a person is lonely only insomuch as he has yet to become what his present power makes it possible for him to be. It means, also, that he is lonely insofar as he has yet to acquire the power to become in the future what he lacks the power to become presently.

To illustrate, when we say that a child is lonely, we mean that he has not fulfilled all the possibilities of his being as a child. We mean that he has never exhausted his power to be unto himself as a child more than he now is as a child. But we must not confine the conception of his loneliness merely to the possibilities in his past and present power. The child did not exhaust his possibilities in the past, and he probably is not exhausting them presently. And even if we assume that this were the case, that he has become all

that it has been possible for him to now be, he nevertheless would still be lonely. He is lonely for all that he can become in the future, but which he lacks the power to become presently. Loneliness is not only the lack of fulfillment of the possibilities of present power. It is also the lack of fulfillment of infinite possibilities that do not yet exist in a being's power. The power of every being is lonely; and no power is capable of becoming presently what it will be capable of becoming in eternity.

When we speak of the infinite power of God, we do not mean that He has exhausted possibilities to become all that He could ever be. For if we say that the possibilities of being are infinite in God, then we must follow our logic, and say that in Him possibilities are inexhaustible. To be exact, if we say that possibilities are exhausted in God, then we deny that there is any possibility at all. For if all possibilities were once fulfilled, then there would no longer be any possibilities or power; there would be only the actualities of being. For power is regarded as the capacity to do what has yet to be done. Obviously, what has yet to be done is not yet actual; and for this reason, if there were only the actual, then there could be no power.

People ordinarily define power as the ability to act. But this definition is only an abstraction which does not do sufficient justice to the nature of an act. An act is simply action, and action can come only out of action; it can never come out of some "power" which is itself something entirely actionless. When we speak of a person's power to act, we actually are speaking only of the possibilities that inhere in his action for further action. When we say that he is not using his power to act, we simply say that he is not acting out his possibilities. When we say that his power to act is

limited, we say that the possibilities that inhere in his action to take further action are limited. But we still have not defined the term power intelligibly.

For the moment, let us repeat that power is the possibilities that inhere in action for action to continue and direct itself to achieve certain ends. We affirm that the world is intelligible, and that all action is *for* something not yet attained. To be meaningful at all, action must be purposeful; and purpose is meaningful only if it is mental action that is aimed at fulfilling possibilities that are not yet fulfilled. Now, to complete our definition of power, we need to define "possibility" as a term that is used in our definition.

Either possibilities exist as something independent of God which determine His Being, or else God creates possibilities within Himself by His own action. Already I have stated that the writer accepts, *ad hominem*, the existence of a personal, purposeful God. This work lays no claim to demonstrating beyond any doubt the existence of God while the unbeliever does not want Him to exist. But I have also stated that we who believe in God should make our conception of His nature consistent in reason and principle. Since we conceive of God as purposeful and personal, our definitions of power, action, and possibility must cohere with our conception of God as a Person. We must not define possibility as something which is impersonal and external to God, or which controls Him by determining what He can do or be.

A possibility must be distinguished from an actuality. An actuality is something that now exists by virtue of action, while a possibility exists only as an alternative for action in some mind. Possibilities are actual in the sense that they are alternatives for action present in mind but they are non-actual in that God or some other being has yet to transform

them from things only thought into things that are more than merely thought. Possible things are actual as they are conceived in mind; but they are non-actual until they are executed by action into supra-mental form. God is the Creator of all possibilities. No thing is possible, and no thing can be actual, until it is first conceived by the will of God. But this does not mean that God is mere infinite conception or pure reason. God is also infinite perception, sensation, and active life in infinite aspects and forms. For if God were only pure conception or thought, then His experience would lack the beauty and fullness of infinite forms, sensibility, and feelings. There are actualities in God's reason which are not yet actual in forms other than only in His thought. God creates possibilities by the inventive action of His will. He then creates actualities by transforming things possible in His thought into things as they can exist in ways other than merely mental ways.

Before God created anything that we now know, the thing existed already, but only in the form of a conception in God's mind. As such, the thing as we now know it did not yet exist, except as a possibility that it might exist, or only as an actuality with limited form in the thought of God's will. The thing existed in the form of a conception because of the inventive action which is God's intelligence. It now exists as a supra-conception, or with supra-mental form, because God acts for effects other than merely mental effects. Since God is Infinite Being, He is more than merely mental being. We see God's Being manifest in the physical, chemical, and biological forms of the world that He has created. And though we have a knowledge of His Being only in these forms, we have no reason to assume that He could not express Himself in an infinite variety of forms or ways.

Customarily, we differentiate mental action from physi-

cal or non-mental action. We think of the mind as an agency acting, as when we are thinking a thought, remembering an event, imagining a thing, or being aware of anything at all. When we think of a vegetable that is acting to grow, or of an inorganic object that is moving through space, we usually consider these actions to be essentially different in nature than the action of mind. But in point of fact, we have no ground on which to make this distinction. We observe that action achieves different effects; but action as such cannot be divided into different realities, or else we lose a standing definition of what action is, and deny the unity of the activity of God. God does not act mentally, physically, and biologically. He simply acts, *ad arbitrium*, and gets mental, physical, and biological results. If every effect required a different kind of action as its cause, then, since there is an infinite variety of effects, there would also be an infinite amount of different kinds of action, and a suitable definition of action would be impossible.

Action is commonly defined as the exertion of power. We see the inadequacy of this definition when we try to derive action from something that is not itself active. Either power is active or it is not active. If it is active, then it is only another name for action; hence it does not really define action at all. But if power is inactive, then before it can be exerted to create action, something must act to do the exerting, and exertion itself is only another name for action. We might make some progress here by admitting that a finite mind can have only a very limited understanding of the nature of an act. We know that we act; but a finite mind can have only finite understanding of how action is possible. The only serviceable explanation of action that we have discovered is the fact of purpose and loneliness. If a person were not lonely, then he would never have any cause to act

at all. Of course this does not explain how a person can exist to be lonely in the first place. Nor do we pretend to be able to explain how existence is possible. But as we have noted earlier, action cannot occur except in some being whose existence is mysterious and lonely. There is never any reason for any being to act at all if he is not lonely. Consequently, this moves us to define action simply as *lonely being fulfilling its purpose*. Action without purpose would be meaningless, and purpose without loneliness would be logically impossible.

Shortly ago, I defined the lonely being as the being who has not yet become all that which it has been possible for him to be. A being is lonely because he has never exhausted his opportunities to become all that which he could have become. But also, he is lonely to become in the future what he lacks the possibilities to become at the present time. I asserted that the lonely person's power is limited, and defined his power in terms of his possibilities. This implies that possibilities change in time, and are brought about as results of creative action. Possibilities do not exist externally to the acting agent; but they inhere in action itself, and are brought about as creative effects or results of action that has already occurred. However, possibilities can be created only by God. The finite acting agent does not create its own opportunities; it merely acts them out, or it does not act them out.

God creates infinite possibilities within Himself by His own free action. He freely creates His own laws of reason and moral principles, and determines for Himself what He can do and be through His own enduring freedom. We have said that infinite laws and principles have existed infinitely in the past as characteristics of God's nature. But this does not mean that God is governed by necessity, or that He does

not create His own laws and principles. Any laws or principles that have existed infinitely in the past have done so because they have been infinitely sustained by God's creative action. God never created them for a first time. Their reality is sustained by His will, and He has created them always with no beginning. There are no principles of reason or morality which God could not change if He willed to change them. But because He wills to be infinitely rational and eternally moral, He adheres to His own laws.

What God determines as possible for Himself governs also the action of all acting agents which He creates freely. God endows every free agent with limited possibilities, which determine what effects the agent can achieve through its own free action. Also, God determines the limits by which the acting agent can act freely. He determines the laws which govern all action, and the extent to which any agent can act freely in relation to those laws. He creates the limits of our freedom; and even His own freedom is limited by the government of His own laws.

Earlier, I asserted that the lonely being lacks possibilities to be now what it will be possible for him to become in the future. This implies that, in the future, action will discover new possibilities in itself which it does not presently possess. Action always achieves new possibilities by its own action. Action is creative, progressive, and changeful, even if the progress is backward or toward effects that are morally objectionable in the free moral agent. In the chapter on creation, I stated that human beings create things of their own all along, and a qualification is now needed for this remark.

A finite being never actually creates anything at all. God creates all acting agents, and determines what effects they may achieve by the possibilities with which He endows

them. The finite free agent creates nothing; he simply *dis-
covers* the possibilities that God has given him, then realizes
them through action which God has made possible through
His creative will. The finite free agent does not create his
own action; for all action is made possible only by the crea-
tive will of God. We do not make our own action possible;
we merely determine through our freedom the manner in
which we shall act, or the purposes which our action will
fulfill. Our action, purpose, and freedom are made possible
only by God.

Now, at this point, we need to consider the apparently
impersonal action which we observe in the physical world.
We seem to see about us an apparently unlimited amount
of objects that are acting, and which appear to be inorganic,
lifeless, and impersonal. The ordinary person regards the
earth on which he stands to be lifeless and impersonal, just
as he regards all inorganic objects which he experiences as
existing outside his mind. We look at a pile of rocks, and we
say to ourselves, "Now, don't these rocks seem to be inac-
tive, unconscious, and without purpose?" Modern physics,
of course, demonstrates that the rocks are not really inactive;
for they can be analyzed down to their constituents, which
are active processes of energy conveniently called electrons,
protons, neutrons, etc. The rocks appear to be inactive in
the mind, as we observe them as motionless solids possess-
ing certain properties such as hardness and color. But sci-
ence does not equate the rocks with their hardness and color;
and it doubts that these qualities exist except as appearances
in the mind. The rocks are not really solid, colored, and hard.
In final analysis, they are processes of energy which react
with the mind to cause the mental effects of solidity, hard-
ness, and color. No physicist today claims that an electron

itself has color or hardness. He asserts that the rocks are but a complex organization of energy processes that are understandable only by their effects in our minds.

The modern scientist describes the physical world as a world of action. He uses the term "physical" with his tongue in his cheek; for what is apparently physical is demonstrably only activity "out there," which we usually distinguish as being different than the activity of the mind. Our present question is whether the activity "out there" is actually different in nature than mental activity, and whether it is lifeless, unconscious, and without purpose. We are compelled to ask, Is the physical world impersonal and without concern for the persons who live in it? or is it the activity of a personal God, Who is infinitely concerned for the welfare of all persons whom He has created?

To answer these questions, we need to ask several others. Let us momentarily suppose that life and mind have not yet evolved, either on this planet or anywhere else. Let us suppose that only the activity or force "out there" exists. This force does not exist for any person, since no person has yet come into being. We take it as obvious that if no person existed, then any activity before the origin of persons would be impersonal activity. Otherwise, we should contradict ourselves just by our terms. Since many philosophers and scientists regard the activity "out there" to be material or impersonal, let us see whether they have any rational grounds on which to maintain their contention. Atheists, materialists, and mechanists argue that their belief in impersonal force is rational; or else they must admit that the belief is irrational or non-rational, and in such case lay reason aside. Also, some theologians claim that the force in the universe is impersonal, but that it is a "force for the good."

Now, if this force is a force for the good, does it have any knowledge of the good that it can do? Does it have any idea of what is good? Is it able to distinguish between good and evil, or between good and less-good? The impersonalists are hard put to explain how such a force can do any good at all without doing it blindly. It is an incontestable datum in our experience that only a conscious being can discriminate between good and evil, as discrimination is rational or meaningful only in the knowledge of some thinking mind. An impersonal force could have no ideas at all. Ideas do not exist except as belonging to some mind or thinking agency. Ideas floating outside of mind would be unrelated and meaningless. Our experience bears out that ideas occur only in mind, and only an intelligent agency can relate ideas meaningfully.

This is not to deny that a thinking agent can act unconsciously. There is no reason to assume that an acting agent cannot act either consciously or unconsciously. When a person is awake, his soul is acting for conscious effects as he interacts with the world. And when he is asleep, his soul is acting for unconscious effects, while he is still interacting with the world. But to say that any force is entirely impersonal, or that it can act only unconsciously, is another matter. If it can act either consciously or unconsciously, then it obviously is personal. But if it acts only unconsciously, then it is meaningless to itself, for meaning is experienced only in conscious awareness and thought. If the activity we observe in the "physical" world is impersonal, then it has no awareness of what it is doing.

Action without government by conscious purpose is blind. A thinking agent may act unconsciously to fulfill purpose, as when a person is asleep. But in this case, the unconscious action is conditioned and directed by principles

inherent in the thinking agent when it is in a conscious and thoughtful state. For example, when a person leaves his house to walk downtown, he need not constantly devote conscious attention to get to the place where he is going. He may devote his conscious thought to other matters, as his intelligence will act unconsciously to guide him to his destination. If his walk is routine, then most probably he will cover the larger part of the distance without being consciously aware of where he is going. He may chat with a friend, and guide himself consciously only at traffic lights or corners.

Most psychologists have argued that an infant at birth is without conscious principles to orient his actions. If this is true, then the infant's action, as far as the infant himself is concerned, is meaningless. For in such case, the infant would think no thoughts, nor relate any ideas together in which he could experience meaning. But the idea that a living baby is unconscious at birth is subject to no proof, and certainly is subject to a great deal of doubt. Even if we assume that the infant is unconscious and experiences no meaning, we still can explain his behavior as intelligent and purposeful. The unconscious activity of the infant's soul is informed with the intelligent will of God that the infant survive. Or at least, until the infant acquires a conscious will of his own to meet his needs, the activity of his organism is an expression of the intelligent purpose of God.

The impersonalists hold that life and mind evolve out of the impersonal activity of the universe. Highly complex organizations of impersonal energy give rise to living organisms; and yet more complex energy processes give origin to personal organisms that think. People who hold this belief sink inevitably in the quicksand of a dualistic

world view. Their greatest trouble is in not realizing that they stand on no ground. They delude themselves with ambiguous abstractions, saying that in reality there is neither the personal nor the impersonal, hence protecting themselves from the accusation of being dualistic. This frees them from being called impersonalists, and from the charge of dualism which holds that there are different forces in the world between which interaction can never be explained. But the immunity of these thinkers from just accusation is only a sham. They are lost in the clouds of empty abstractionism, where they lose sight of the simple fact that we are real persons living in a personal world.

We are compelled to ask, If this force in nature is neither personal nor impersonal, then how can it ever give rise to the personal? The impersonalist can answer this only by inventing fatuous abstractions to deny that he is a person. If the force in the universe is unconscious, then it is meaningless to itself; and it becomes meaningful only when some mind evolves in which it is discovered to have meaning. But this kind of reasoning is logically impotent, because it puts priority where priority can never belong. It implies that the lifeless gives rise to the living, and that the meaningless gives rise to the meaningful, which does serious injustice to common sense as well as to the causal principle in reflective reason.

There is no imaginable alternative to the idea of the personal and the impersonal. There is, of course, the idea of the heteropersonal; but the heteropersonal can be explained only in terms of the personal; consequently, it must be understood as an expression of the personal. If the activity of the "physical" universe were different in essence than the activity of mind, then the world would be a dual

nature of mind and matter, and interaction between the two forces could never be explained. In fact, if such were the case, then there could never be any interaction at all. Certainly neither of these dual forces could ever give rise to the other. In order to avoid this impasse, we must adopt the philosophy of personalism which holds that the "physical" world is the activity of an infinitely conscious and intelligent God.

The apparent purposelessness in a pile of seemingly inactive rocks is an illusion of naive common sense. The rocks with their qualities of hardness and color exist only as appearances in the mind. But these appearances are possible because the rocks "in themselves" are the action of an intelligent God Who interacts with finite thinking agencies to make a knowledge of rocks an actuality in finite minds. The universe's activity is intelligible, because it is an expression of the intelligence of The Infinite Being.

Many scientists have asserted that they can only *assume* that the universe's activity is intelligible. Many have said that there is no exhaustive proof that the universe is orderly and coherent, or that it is informed with principles to make it lawful and meaningful. Also, there is no conclusive evidence that anything even exists outside of our minds. Some scientists who call themselves "relativists" assert that all knowledge is relative to every particular knowing mind. And that such is the case is obvious, for how could any knowledge ever exist except in some knowing mind? But some relativists have gone to abortive extremes, and insist that we can only *assume* that the universe is ordered by principles, or that it even exists outside our thought. Since knowledge is relative to every knowing mind, if anything at all is certain, then it is certain only to some particular mind. For

what *seems* to be "out there" may not be "out there" at all. Since all principles exist only in mind, there may not be any principles in the "out there" to correspond with the principles we have in mind.

The relativist makes a worthwhile contribution to the humility of science, by reminding us that our principles are formulations of finite intelligence. We did not create the universe, and we should be conceited to imagine that we might ever completely understand it. Howbeit, humility can become egregious; and it does so when it identifies egotism with the willingness to believe something short of perfect proof. To doubt that the universe exists outside our minds, or that it is informed with principles that make it intelligible regardless of our minds, is to make no contribution either to science or to our practical needs in living. Science can operate practically only if it believes that the universe it studies is ordered by principles.

It may be that extreme relativists use the term "assume" always, because they are afflicted with a pseudo-scientific, excess conscientiousness about avoiding dogmatism, fanaticism, and self-delusion. Many scientists ardently and persistently plead for experimentalism, logical analysis, and critically reflective reason, as though they take it as a fact that science is possible, that it can lead to a discovery of objective truths in an intelligible world. Nobody has eulogized science so much as the scientists themselves; yet some who go by the name of scientist deny the possibility of science, in effect, by insisting that we can never have certainty that the universe is lawful or informed with principles. Either a person believes in science as a method of discovering intelligibility in a principled world, or he does not. To say that we are searching for intelligibility, then in the

same breath say that the universe may not be principled at all, is to question that science is possible, and to pull a pail over our heads while we are trying to see the light.

The extreme relativist says, Now the universe may appear to be lawful and ordered; but what is "out there," if there is anything at all "out there," may not be as lawful and ordered as it appears in the mind. The universe might in reality be chaotic and unprincipled. Or if things hang together at all, then they may be ordered only accidentally and unpredictably. Also, that our experience and thinking can be ordered by principles may be merely an illusion. We can only *assume* that the world and our thinking can be ordered and lawful, but we can never be certain. And we must be prepared always to modify our assumptions.

That we should modify our conceptions of the nature of laws and principles is a truly scientific attitude. As our knowledge of nature and the universe increases, we must modify our explanations to account for newly discovered facts. But if we say that we can only *assume* that the universe's action is principled, then we do not really affirm science at all. We simply make ourselves intellectual Cynthias of the minute, and flounder in the wishy-washiness of the scientist who is not really a scientist. To be true scientists, we must believe positively and consistently that the universe is principled, and that our assumption of its intelligibility is an assumption that is true.

Because of the finitude of the human mind, we formulate our principles or laws regarding nature's activity with only a finite grasp of facts and with finite language. The structure of reality must be infinitely complex, and the language of God's thought is probably bound by no limits. Which means, that the purpose of science and philosophy must be only to grow nearer to God's thought, but never to feign to en-

compass His thought, nor to seek vainly to understand all reality. As we broaden our knowledge of nature, we formulate more workable principles and laws by which to understand and profit from nature. As we learn to predict and control nature with greater accuracy, our principles correspond more closely with the principles by which nature is actually informed. Because our thinking is fallible, we must learn by trial and error, as well as by intuition and critical reflection, to modify our principles to better understand the activity of God's Being "out there."

Usually, the impersonalist believes in science, and declares that the impersonal force in the universe is a force that is intelligible. When we ask how this is possible, the impersonalist answers that the universe's force is lawful and ordered, but the fact of this order is no argument for the existence of a personal God. This is to say that order as such signifies only order; it does not warrant the assumption that there is a conscious intelligence which does the ordering.

If we assume that this is true, then it follows that the universe is ordered only accidentally or it is ordered mechanically. If the order is accidental, then it is not intelligible, because it is not subject to any causal explanation. If things happen only accidentally, then there can be no trustworthiness in our scientific predictions as to what will happen, or in our ideas as to what we should expect to happen. Philosophers have pointed out that if the universe is a mechanism, then no free will can ever be born of it; consequently, the morality which we experience as a necessity in our lives is an inexplicable illusion. Many impersonalists deny that human beings exist with free will, but often become angry when some person fails to act "responsibly." Here, we can only repeat what every moralist worthy of

mention has insisted to be a fact, namely, that if there is no free will to choose between alternatives for behavior, then behavior is accidental or mechanical, and no person is responsible for anything that he ever does.

As we have stated earlier, the philosophy of personalism regards the universe's activity to be the expression of an intelligent, conscious God. Through this belief, we avoid the contradictions of impersonalism, and we have a foundation for reverence and worship. Many impersonalists remind us that worship is possible without belief in a personal God. But their religion would confine us in our worship to mere humanity and to human frailty. We do not question that reverence for our fellow beings is worship. Indeed, such reverence is invaluable. A worship of God without love for man is affected and hollow. But the worship of man alone cannot suffice to express proper gratitude for our existence and blessings in life. We need to worship the Creator Who gave us the gift of our existence, Who is infinitely greater than ourselves, and Who will make our lives eternally meaningful. If there is no personal God, then there is *not* infinite meaning and love, because there is no infinite consciousness in which infinite meaning and love can abide.

Impersonalism would confine us to a needless limitation to our reverence and worship. The essence of reverence and worship is *gratitude*. We revere a fellow man when we are *grateful* to him for the value he offers to us in living. Many impersonalists take pride in calling themselves "humanists." Impersonal humanism calls for confining our attention to men and to things in this world. The impersonal humanist avows that gratitude to the Creator is not vital to genuine religion. He likes to cite the Holy Wars, the Inquisition, and summon to our attention the other-worldliness of the monks who live in isolation. He never exhausts

examples of how men who have believed in God have betrayed mankind.

One wonders if the humanist has ever encountered a greatly self-conscious and loving Christian, or if his eyes were open when he made such a meeting. Nor can one but wonder what goes on in the "humanist's" mind—when he looks at the sad eyes of the bloody Nazarene hanging gruesomely on the Cross. How easily the "humanist" hears the cant of the religious hypocrites! How quickly he sees the sanctimony of the pulpit pounders and regular church attenders! But where are his ears, and where are his eyes, while the Carpenter is on the Mount, or preaching love for humanity on the dusty roads of Palestine, and saying, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

One would gather from reading the literature of humanism that the "humanist" heart is aflame with love for his fellow man. But is it, really? How humanitarian is the love of the "humanist" for Jesus? How is it that he takes as his own the humanitarianism of the Carpenter, but denies the Carpenter Himself, yet calls himself this great lover? What is it that he wishes to idolize in MAN? Has MAN no longer any vainglory, feeble wisdom, and selfish love? Has the "humanist" idolized himself? Did he create himself? Did he create the heavens and the earth? Did he create the stars that charm his soul in the night-time? To Whom is he grateful for the miracle of his existence? To Whom does he offer thanksgiving for a warm summer that comes after a long winter? Who created the birds that sing in the trees? MAN?

The Pharisees and learned lawyers approached Jesus in a public place, determined to heckle Him. This audacious Person had preached that every man should forgive all his enemies after their sins. Such teaching contradicted the current humanism of an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth.

For a long time, these lawyers edified by human ideals had sought feverishly to prove that Our Lord was just an eccentric impostor of God. They would stop at nothing to find His weakness, and prove that He was just a mere man. At last, one anxious lawyer imagined a question that would put Him in His place. With phony piety, he asked, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Our Lord answered:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second great commandment is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

The moral weakness of humanism is its false self-sufficiency, and the vanity of its self-limited love. The man who is not grateful to the Creator for his existence cannot be deeply grateful to anybody for anything. He may talk and write eloquently of his fondness and concern for his fellow man. But this makes him only a maestro of words, not an artist at gratitude, and not a deep affirmer of life. He may say that he expresses his gratitude for his existence in his *enjoyment* of his existence—and this is the error of humanism. One may enjoy the scent of flowers in his garden, and the song of mocking birds in the forest. He may say that he is grateful to nature for these beautiful things. But he cannot say a prayer of praise to nature, without personalizing nature; and in this case, he simply is showing a need for a personal God while hampering himself with unbelief. Or, he may say no prayers of gratitude at all. And if he does, without believing in God, then his prayer is a mere soliloquy, in which his suppressed need for God is crying for recognition and freedom. The humanist calls for an

affirmation of life in this world. He has seen the harm that has been done by men who affirm the Other World but are pessimistic and surly in this one. The simple truth is, the man who affirms life deeply craves it in this world, and wants it never to end. To take a virtuous life out of context with its own indefinite continuation is to make of it a moral travesty. The deep affirmer of life is never a pessimist. The affirmation of life is more spiritual and emotional than it is intellectual; and he who affirms life deeply will allow no lack of conclusive evidence to hinder his faith that he will live forever. The humanist indifference to God and to the immortality of the soul testifies to the shallowness and pretension of the humanist affirmation of life in this world. Humanism's romantic idolization of man is an egregious *amour propre*, burdened by the contradiction of the frail spirit that can neither truly renounce life nor truly affirm it. Humanism is moral double-talk. It lays claim to making life in this world meaningful. Yet by affirming the end of the soul in death, it would bring the meaning of our lives in this world ultimately to nought. It is without gratitude to God for this life even while it lasts.

The fallacy of humanism or impersonalism is its assumption that the universe is intelligible but without intelligence. Usually, the impersonalist assumes that the universe's activity is intelligent, but ignores the meaningful definition of what intelligence is. Psychologists define intelligence as the power to effectually solve problems through the employment of memory, imagination, and conceptual thinking. They define mind as the agency which perceives, remembers, imagines, thinks conceptually, and acts. Manifestly, if intelligence were not conscious, then there could be no intelligibility and no notion of intelligence. For when we speak of a thing as intelligible, we mean that it is under-

standable, knowable, comprehensible, or meaningful. We mean also that it is orderly, logical, coherent, and rational. Depending on what it is that we are talking about, we might also mean that intelligibility is that which is self-explanatory, or capable of being known through itself.

If the universe's activity were impersonal, then it would meet none of the above-mentioned requirements for intelligibility. Impersonal activity could never explain itself, due to the fact that it would be unconscious, and hence meaningless and unknowable to itself. If the universe's activity is ordered and coherent, then it is ordered accidentally, which makes science impossible, or it is ordered by principle and law. Impersonal activity could never be ordered by law or principle, because laws and principles are meaningless except as they exist in thought, or in action which expresses thought or is informed with thought. No principle can exist before it is thought; nor can any principle determine action unless action is determined by thought. As a theoretical groundwork for science, impersonalism is barren soil. It is dry and without guano, because it is depleted of principle and law. The impersonalist would grow orchids in a bed of solid rock, without earth, moisture, or light.

We are able to truly believe in science only if we believe in a personal God. Science is concerned with discovering principles and laws in nature and the universe. Nature and the universe is without principles and laws, unless the activity "out there" expresses the rational thought of God. Because of our limited perception and power of reason, we always shall have to modify our conceptions of laws and principles, in order to meet our increasing knowledge of facts and their causal relations. The ancient Greeks considered all things to be made of fire, water, air, and earth. Their principles of nature were only partially true, and in

time were modified to meet a changing knowledge of nature's complexity. Ptolemy regarded the earth to be the central body around which the sun and all the planets revolve. The leading principles in his astronomy were only partially true, in the sense that they are given in our common perception, for the planets *do* appear to revolve around the earth. In the 16th century, his principles were replaced by the system of Copernicus, whose system has since been modified in part to meet new and more accurate studies of the universe's nature. Principles of Newtonian mechanics were true for the limited purpose which they served, but have been altered to account for observations of phenomena that are not explainable by Newtonian mechanics. What we call the law of gravitation today, in the future we may call by another name, or alter in definition to answer newly discovered questions and observations of nature's complexity. There is no reason to believe that we shall ever have a final knowledge of nature. We shall have no finished collection of laws and principles, none of which is subject to alteration and re-definition. The "out there" always will remain "out there." We perhaps never shall think any of God's principles precisely as He thinks them in governing the activity of His Being "out there." We always shall have only finite conceptions to describe and explain the activity of God. But as our knowledge grows, we may broaden our conceptions to better understand the manner in which God acts. That our principles are formulations of finite thinking is no reason to believe that the activity "out there" is without laws and principles. We can lay no claim to rational science at all, if we do not believe that the activity of the universe is principled and lawful. Our assumption that nature is intelligible must be positively affirmative and consistently faithful. That intelligibility to us is relative to our changing

knowledge is no reason to assume that intelligibility exists only in finite thought.

We must reject the extreme theory of the relativism of knowledge which is an arid scepticism that doubts all things, even that knowledge is possible. The extreme relativist holds that he can doubt all things, even the existence of himself who is doing the doubting. Such doubt leads inevitably to intellectual nihilism, or to a fog of vapid verbal stratagems which is only the muddle of exaggerated open-mindedness. The extreme relativist says that his ideal is to achieve infinite flexibility of mind. But to say that such flexibility is possible, or that it would be worthwhile even if it were possible, is to ignore the fact that men have moral and emotional needs for commitment to practical beliefs for living. Morality cannot be infinitely flexible and still be morality. Men have a need for trust and love; and morality is impossible without definite commitments to a way of living. Man cannot live at all without practical beliefs, nor ever be trustworthy without sincere convictions. No one can really doubt anything that he really believes, for in such case he would not really believe it in the first place. Infinite flexibility of mind is a fiction, and it would be worthless even if it were possible.

Moreover, if we say that we can doubt all things, then we also say that we can doubt the validity of the proposition that we can doubt all things—which is reasoning simply *reductio ad absurdum*. Extreme relativism can lead to no conclusions ever, except to the conclusion that no conclusion is ever definitely credible, which is like putting on our hats while we are cutting off our heads. The extreme relativist claims that he can doubt even his own existence. But when he says: "I doubt that I exist," he is just taking eccentric advantage of the reality of his own "I" to play an intellectual

game with his own "I." If we say that we can doubt all things, then we also say that we can doubt that there is any experience or meaning at all. But if there were no experience and no meaning, then clearly there could be no doubt and no doubters. This sort of scientism flounders in intellectual impotence, because it distorts critical reflection into a mere language reverie in which all reason is an apostasy of reason. We may say that we can doubt many things, and have in mind that doubt can be constructive for preventing arrival at erroneous conclusions. But the man who claims that he can doubt his own existence, or the existence of others, is making mere noises. Such doubt is psychologically impossible. The extreme relativist's *belief* in the constructiveness of his doubt is impractical and silly.

To make doubt or critical reflection an end in itself is as naive as making uncritical belief an end in itself. To say that we can or should doubt all things is as dangerous as saying that we can or should believe all things. For such doubt can deter a person's growth in wisdom just as much as can rigid and unimaginative complacency in one's dogmas. Critical reflection is worthwhile only when it serves some constructive purpose, or when it leads to an affirmation of principles that inspire men to live more loveful and beautiful lives. Many writers have romantically idolized critical reflection and doubt, and they would convert philosophy into an endless series of insoluble conundrums, or make life a mere inquiry or endless series of unanswerable questions. The purpose of philosophy should not be to turn all people into a mass of dunderheaded Doubting Thomases. Rather, it should constantly strive to discover and affirm great principles to exalt our aesthetic and moral life.

Fortunately, extreme relativists are rare, and not one of them is ever consistent. Like all other men, they *believe*

many things to be real and right, which they do not doubt and *cannot* sincerely doubt; and they go beyond the vacuum of mere assumption. They may claim to possess the most open-minded philosophical methodology ever invented, namely, the pure open-mindedness of being able to doubt all things. But they seem to *believe* very strongly in the worthwhileness of such doubt; consequently, they are just advocates of a new kind of faith. Furthermore, whether he doubts it or not, the extreme relativist is a *homo sapien* whose emotional life would suffocate shortly if he were really able to doubt all things. That he *can* doubt all things is an intellectual pretension. That he *would* if he could would reduce him to insanity. Such doubt would make a genuine affirmation of life impossible. It would destroy love and the arts, and would make science and philosophy only haunting noises in an endless dark night.

We stand to gain everything in modifying our conceptions to make new knowledge more meaningful and serviceable. But we can gain nothing in rational thought by doubting that laws and principles abide in the reality outside our minds. Our conception of laws and principles must change. But the laws and principles in reality about which we modify our conceptions never change. Or at least, if any laws and principles change, then their change is governed by yet other laws and principles. What God has created is intelligible, and will remain intelligible always. As we discover more intelligibility in our experience in the world, our relation to God becomes more meaningful, and we move closer to Him.

If he is consistent in his thinking, the extreme relativist can never really affirm anything. Nor can the impersonalist ever explain anything. He cannot explain love, beauty, reason, purpose, or righteousness. These things cannot exist

except in conscious experience; and they can never be derived from any impersonal action or force. Life and the universe would be impossible without an infinitely intelligent God.

The problem of evil recurs at this point, as we are asked to explain, say, a malignant cancerous growth in a human being or animal for whom God is morally concerned. Having in mind that the "physical" universe is the activity of God, one might ask, Then how do you explain the fact of an earthquake or windstorm that kills thousands of people? Does this not show that God's will is not always good? If God creates all possibilities, then does He not also create the possibilities of evil?

Again, we are compelled to consider the counter-proclivities in God's nature, which He warrants within Himself to make it possible for Him to be a Moral Person. I have stated previously that God determines all possibilities through His freedom. Proclivities in God's nature to do evil arise out of this freedom; and because He wills to be a Moral Person, God determines the possibilities of His limits of Self-control which He requires of Himself to be moral. God freely determines the possibilities of good and evil in His moral Self-struggle, and freely limits His Self-restrictions by His will to be moral. God wills a moral world. If it were not for His moral will, then He could create a world in which there were no evils, in which every spirit could exist in an eternal state of effortless bliss. But God wills a dynamic world in which every person can grow to no end in moral achievement and new experiences in living. The Supreme Person has not chosen an end of pure, infinite bliss. Rather, He has chosen an eternally active life of creativity. In this infinitely open world, no evil can destroy any person who stands determined never to be destroyed. No evil can

do any harm that God will not cure in time, if our faith will endure with Him. In creating the possibilities of evil as well as good, God creates the possibilities of morality. That He permits limited evil for the sake of self-struggle does not indicate that His will is not good. It simply proves that His will is moral.

Because God creates possibilities infinitely, He is endlessly active to transform infinite possibilities into infinite actualities. God transforms His ideas into existing forms that have more than merely mental reality. He creates free beings who can conceive good and evil and act out good and evil. And that He might experience infinite moral meaning in His own freedom, God bears sway with certain circumscribed tendencies to evil in Himself. Yet, He acts constantly to execute His ideals in the moral world that He creates constantly.

Thus again, we say that God is lonely. Because He creates possibilities infinitely, in Him possibilities can never be exhausted. God is the Infinite Creator. He is lonely to become in eternity all that in which there is no end to what He can become.

Our purpose in life is never to achieve a definite end, in which we become fixated in some changeless state that endures forever. Rather, our purpose is to grow, and only infinite possibilities of growth can make growth infinitely meaningful. Our education is never a preparation for anything final. Education has no end; it has only the continuous objective of growth in the meaning of the self. Only a lonely being can grow. Only a being who is aware of his loneliness can grow more meaningful to himself.

CHAPTER 6.

LONELINESS AND THE MORALLY AUTONOMOUS MAN

A man cannot wonder at anything in nature that is more problematical, overwhelming, and enigmatic than himself. There is no mystery a man can ponder that is quite so constantly amazing as his own sustained existence. Man exists. He is awed by his existence. Nothing that follows as a consequence of his existence is ever quite so amazing as the mystery of the self facing the self, the self asking why and how it is possible that the self can exist at all.

From a psychological standpoint, the self is the center of all things. From the standpoint of the self's experience of its own experience, the self is not an element or a product of nature within the universe. Rather, the universe is a product of the experience of the self of itself. The self does not exist for the universe; rather, the universe exists for the self. No part of the world of man's experience, no part of na-

ture, the universe, or society is knowable except as it is known in and through a self's experience of its own experience. If a person were to die tomorrow, and could no longer experience his own existence, then for him the world and society would cease to exist when he ceased to exist.

It is true, of course, that every person acknowledges the existence of other persons. One presupposes that all persons are separate, individual, distinct selves experiencing self-hood apart from all others (although, certainly related to all others). No man could presume that other persons were mere fabrications of his imagination, and long remain sane. Yet, it is an incontestable fact of experience that every self experiences other selves only as figments of his own self-experience. No person can experience another person from within as the other experiences himself privately. He can never experience others as they are in themselves, because he experiences only images and impressions of them; and he presumes that his mental impressions more or less objectively represent others as what they really are in themselves.

It is a necessary presupposition that other selves exist, that the social interaction of selves is more than a mere conglomeration of imaginary selves within oneself. The theory that only a knowledge of the self is possible, that therefore oneself is the only really existing thing, could never conduce to social sanity. It would reduce the reality of others to mere imagination, and would wreck the meaning of social urgency. If a person decided that only he existed, that other selves did not exist uniquely as individuals apart from each other, then the whole social enterprise would lose its heart for him, as he realized that his obligations to others were mere narcissistic fictions. He would suddenly see the love of others for himself as just himself fabricating love for himself. He would see his own love for others as a

fraud of schizophrenic madness, the self creating others upon whom to project the self's love for itself.

Still, it remains that if he died tomorrow, if his self-awareness ceased, then for him the whole universe would also die. He presumes that the universe would not cease to exist for others. But this social presumption is not susceptible to verification. For if he ceased to exist, then it could not be proved to him that the universe continued to exist during his death. Other selves have meaning to him only if they are related to him in conscious experience. Consequently, if there is no conscious experience of himself and the world of others, then there is no meaning for him at all. Each of us presumes that the world goes on after he dies. But such a presumption is not subject to verification, for the simple reason that every person is subject to the same egocentric predicament. Every person experiences meaning only in a conscious relation to other persons; and no person can verify a meaning outside of that relation. The self can get outside itself only by inference. From the images in his mind, a person infers the existence of others. Still, it remains that he experiences only the images in his mind, only his private mental impressions; and it cannot be proved that these impressions represent anything beyond themselves.

The verification of the existence of others necessitates the existence of others before a verification is possible. Our social philosophy would fall on its head the moment we seriously deviated from the common sense conviction of the separate existence of every person. There could be no sense of social obligation, no sense of urgency about our relations to others, if we did not sincerely believe that every self exists in reality as a separate self. The first principle of a sound philosophy of society is that the existence of every self is real and sacred. That any self inherits a right to

neglect, mistreat, or destroy other selves is a pathological principle that governs the thinking of all persons some of the time, and of some persons all of the time. Potentates who sit on the throne are small in number; but persons who have wishful images of the throne are vast in number, as the urge to control others flashes recurrently inside every individual alive. Every day we observe the urge to control others in almost every person who is actively engaged in social affairs. We see school teachers who exult in control over their students. We see teachers who are ill at ease because of a lack of such control. We hear sermons, political speeches, and lectures; and we needn't be psychologists to sense the effort at persuasion and control in the minister, the politician, the salesman, the director, and the worker. The radio, television, magazine, and newspaper disseminate notions into the "social mind" all hours of the day, as every device of persuasion heretofore discovered is employed to market commodities, ideas, causes, and personalities. There are some valuable ideas, good causes, good commodities, and good personalities for sale. But that most attempts at persuasion are exaggerated and incommensurate with a sense of honor is a common understanding in the tolerant social mind. Not only the mass media aim at control, but also individuals without power, possessions or reputation aim at it, and show a need to control others all the days of their lives.

If he is honest in his self-analysis, each of us can detect a need in himself to control others to achieve his own ends. Every person who is active, who is thoughtful and has much feeling, must plot definite ends for himself and aim at their fulfillment with certain determined forcefulness. No matter how truthful, meek, or considerate a life a person seeks to live, if he desires to live responsibly, then he must delineate clear goals, definite means, and ultimate purposes for

himself to achieve. The execution of any specific purpose within a social setting requires controlling other persons. Every individual has needs. His most important needs are of a social nature, such as the craving for love, appreciation, and interpersonal communion. All his social purposes ultimately are oriented with respect to fulfilling these needs. To attain the sense of importance and belonging that he needs, he must relate successfully to others, which requires learning how to properly control and how to yield to control. Persuading other persons assumes so many subtle forms that it is often difficult to judge whether one is controlling or is being controlled. A child often controls his parents under the guise of being controlled. He may behave in an especially agreeable manner in order to win permission for a purpose that otherwise would be denounced. Women are reputedly the world's greatest artists at control under guise. It is an old apothegm that the shrewd woman makes her husband feel that he is ruling the house; she sways his decisions, then gives him credit for intelligent thinking. The point here is that every self requires a controlled relation to others to attain private ends. There can be no meaning in existence as an isolated self. The isolated life is barren. The purpose of life for any person is social; and any attempts to fructify in meaning outside of a controlled social setting can end only in a pathological distortion of the self's nature.

No matter what one's goals or purposes be, whether they are religious or irreligious, moral or immoral, social or counter-social, the execution of any purpose in a social setting requires a manipulation of other persons. To achieve his personal ends, the *counter-others* person influences the experience of others either directly or indirectly. What he wants and achieves, and the manner in which he achieves it influences the experience of others, and to that extent controls

the meaning and existence of others. He is in turn controlled by influences exerted on him by every person he encounters. Probably no person is more conscious of the manipulation equation in human relations than the *counter-others* who is in constant conflict with others.

The life of the *counter-others* person is one of stratagems, flight and lure, defend and attack. There is an inherent awareness in every normal person that he needs communion with others. For this reason, the relation of the *counter-others* to others is one of anxiety, guilt, and alienation. His moral purpose and meaning is distorted in the self-against-others equation in his behavior. It is an ancient truism that there is no security among anarchists and oppressors. They practice honor and fidelity between themselves only to insure each his own survival. The proper relation of all persons would be one of tenderness, mutual respect, and a trust in oneself and others that is based on the maintenance of individual integrities. The *counter-others* needs empathy. He needs to feel it toward others and to receive it from others. But his hostility toward others, or his guilt and flight from others, so restricts his practice of tenderness that he grows to abhor his own hardness. His conflict with others is frustrating. Frustration gives rise to hostility. Hostility causes feelings of guilt, which create strained relations to others in which genuine feelings of tenderness for others is impossible.

The writer has seen extremely *counter-others* persons display tenderness toward little children. But in every case the tenderness was shallow, because the person could not attach to the child with motives free from guilt, self-pity, or utilitarian purposes. Only a person with a chaste conscience, genuine self-respect, and confidence in humanity can attach deeply to another person. There is no real tender-

ness where love is corrupted by guilt, fear, and repressed rancor. I have seen serious social deviants show genuine tenderness to other persons, but they were at the time *counter-others* in nature only by legal definition. They were inmates in a prison, but they were free from the morally defined *counter-others* mentality, as they were no longer afflicted with hostility toward others. The self-against-others equation no longer played in their motives, and they were free from estrangement from themselves. The most touching exhibition of tenderness that I have ever witnessed occurred in a prison between a father and his son.

The life of the *counter-others* is very lonely. The proper relation of all persons would be one of freedom and confidence in a social setting. He who is not free to appear at will in society, and cannot confide in others, naturally longs for such freedom and confidence either consciously or unconsciously. The man in flight, who is sought by others for punishment, naturally is lonely for relief from guilt and fear. He is lonely for freedom, acceptance, and love from others. He is lonely for the satisfaction that can be found only in a sense of integrity in his social relations.

However, the social deviant is not necessarily more *lonesome* than the social conformer. Some persons believe only in themselves. Some are essentially devoid of a true social conscience, and seem to be insusceptible to the logic of normal social-moral reasoning. Many leaders of organized crime machines possess an amoral or *no-others* mentality. Their experience of social privation does not conduce to an awareness of loneliness as much as it would in the person who can experience a feeling of rejection for guilt. But the severest social deviants often are insusceptible to guilt. They are not capable of a sense of shame, because they possess a *no-others* mentality that was developed in infancy and

nurtured in childhood and adolescence. The unfortunate child who has never experienced love cannot experience the anxiety of guilt. The lonesomeness of guilt can afflict only persons fortunate enough to have known love and the fear of losing it. The child who has never known love can have no anxiety of losing love, or of being separated from persons whom he has never possessed. Threats of rejection, scorn, and ridicule can have no moral meaning if they come from one whom he has never loved. To be effective, to create anxiety, and to have real moral meaning, the threat to withdraw love must come from a loved person whose love and feelings matter.

As defined by psychology, a person's conscience is his susceptibility to the anxiety of guilt when he deviates from accepted standards of feeling, thinking, and acting. The *no-others* person has developed no conscience, because no standards of behavior were ever instilled in him by loving persons. Either he has experienced no standard whatever, or else he was confused in his childhood by conflicting standards, or he was so consistently mistreated that he has become hostile to any kind of standard at all. He experiences no sensation of guilt, because he has never developed a moral standard from which feelings of guilt can derive. He has no moral conscience. He is insensitive to the feelings of others. He is incapable of realizing the uniqueness, the genuine separateness, the realness and sacredness of other persons.

In our culture, the *no-others* personality is rare. His loneliness is an especially interesting study, because of the difference between the amoral nature of his motives and those of the normal person. It would be a mistake to say that he is not lonely, on the assumption that a lack of conscience frees him from the lonesomeness of guilt. It is true

that immunity to guilt protects him from much psychological suffering. But the fact is, he was so consistently rejected in childhood that he has become blinded and accustomed to the dreary loneliness of himself. He needs and desires other persons. No social experience can be so frustrating as to destroy the innate need of the self for others. But the satisfaction of the *no-others'* needs is impossible, because he lacks insight into the real nature of his needs and the needs of others. He uses others. Other selves do not exist in their own right. No other self is sacred, and no other self is an end in itself. Only he is an end in himself. All others are only means to achieve his ends. He loves a woman only for the sexual and ego gratification which she can give him; and he cannot share her experience of her own needs as a unique person. He respects her needs only to the extent that it is necessary in order to gain the satisfaction of his own.

The person who is insensitive to the feelings of others, except insofar as he calculates their needs in order to gratify his own, is incapable of sharing the joys of others. There is a profound reward in truly sharing mutually the problems of other persons. Moral beauty is experienced in sharing the tragedy and suffering of others. But for the *no-others* person there is no true sharing, because there are no true others. There is only himself. He struggles to satisfy his needs, but he fails perpetually, because social needs can be genuinely satisfied only through true social sharing. The *no-others'* lack of moral conception of others makes this sharing impossible.

There are two chief traits which characterize the loneliness of this pitiable person. First, he longs for the satisfaction of a need which can be satisfied only through mutual sharing, namely, the need for respect and appreciation. He

needs appreciation from others; and he may succeed in attaining their appreciation for a time. But there is an innate need in every person to love others for the sake of themselves. The *no-others* person does not know what this means. Because of the tragedy of his childhood, such a love is foreign to his heart and mind.

Second, there is his loneliness for the joy of moral triumph. He needs the sensation of satisfaction that can come only from living right in the face of temptation to live wrongly. The *no-others* person is deprived of this joy, because he is insensitive to moral distinctions. He has no conception of right and wrong. He is immune to the rewards of successful moral living.

The *no-others* person seldom appears to suffer from loneliness. He rarely appears lonesome. But I should like to repeat that in this work we are concerned with loneliness as a metaphysical phenomenon, even though it is not always expressed symptomatically in lonesomeness. It is not at all necessary that a person be aware of his loneliness in order to be lonely. Plants that are starved for water need water apparently without awareness of their need. A gambler who needs sunshine may be unaware that his life in a smoky den is unwholesome. There are many persons who need love from others and will not acknowledge it. There are also many who need to give love to others and do not at all realize it. A newborn child needs attention perhaps without conscious awareness of his need. Men need God to save them from misery, moral dissolution, and death; they would need Him for love and guidance even if He did not exist, and whether they knew it or not. The unbeliever is metaphysically lonely for God, even though psychologically he may show no symptoms of longing for God. The rejected person is lonely

for love, even though he may be sufficiently skilled socially to conceal all symptoms.

We have dealt with the loneliness of the *no-others* person in order to properly approach the problem of loneliness in the normal man. We have seen that the *counter-others* or *no-others* person may exhibit loneliness less symptomatically than is normal. In point of fact, outward symptoms are never a true measure of loneliness. Because loneliness is eternal, and since men escape it at one level only to enter it at another, loneliness can have no absolute measure. Only God knows exactly what any man through a course of time could have become, versus what he now is. Psychologically considered, loneliness is equated with lonesomeness, and is the feeling of failure to do, possess, or be what one desires to do, possess, or be. Sadness and languor are symptoms of loneliness thus defined. But a person can be languid and depressed without conscious awareness of his lonely condition. The tragedy of this lack of awareness in many depressed people is common psychiatric understanding.

Unfortunately, it is not commonly understood that people free from symptomatic loneliness may also be lonely. Psychology has naively confined its conception of loneliness to questions of social adjustment. It seems entirely to have missed the point that people who are adjusted in their environs, and who show no signs of depression, may well be the loneliest people in existence.

Properly defined, loneliness is what every person and thing should have, do, or be, but has not yet had, done, or become. We may be unaware of what it is that we need and lack in ourselves; but this negates only our lonesomeness, not our loneliness. Lonesomeness is an awareness of lacking; loneliness is the lacking itself. Eternal loneliness

is the fact that we shall never be all that which it is possible for us to become, because there is no end to the possibilities of our growth within God. Lonesomeness is an awareness of the need to act, to become what one desires to be but has not yet become. Loneliness demands and occasions action; lonesomeness sanctions action. People act either positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, lonesomely or not lonesomely—but they *always* act. All creation is in a state of action. All action is *for* something, whether or not the end that is sought in acting is sought consciously or unconsciously, or whether it is for better or for worse.

Traditional theology has defined God as Pure Act, without accepting the logical meaning of what pure action is. Action is change. Action is the effect of an alteration of being. It is a change either in the nature of a being, or in the position of a being with the passage of time. A concept that God existed at a time prior to creation, and then effected creation only by a change in His position is unthinkable. For since God is Infinite Being, He can have no position. Creation is the result of a change in God's Being. God actually is Infinite Becoming. We must not consider God as a static being, who is eternally immune to change, and restricted by limitations to His creative greatness. We must consider being and becoming as the same. God is Pure Becoming, not static being. God is Living Personality. There are no limits to the greatness that God achieves in eternity by the effects of change. If God had once been static or immutable being, then He would have remained such forever. For change can come only out of change, and static being can never begin to become. Being is just a moment of becoming. Being is a static picture of becoming. Becoming is a process. The Pure Becoming of God is a dynamic process. A dynamic process is something which is always chang-

ing. Being is an abstraction of some form or phase of becoming. Being is a convenient illusion, a static picture which we draw of something which is actually dynamic. For example, we hold that the principles of reason never change. We feel that some things must remain the same, in order that we can recognize and remember things from time to time. We say that the person who was John yesterday remains John and is John today. Two and two made four yesterday in our mathematical conception, and two and two will make four always, because true principles of reason remain always the same.

In the chapter on creation, I stated that the principles of reason are immutable in God. But in saying this, I simply meant that true principles of reason are never absent from God's intelligence. Yet they are dynamic, because their meaning and value are enhanced continuously as they unite with endless principles in God's thought. Seen in the light of more and more principles, every single principle is infinitely changed in meaning and value as it is combined with others in God's infinite thought which is cognitive action. That God is Infinite Becoming does not mean that God is never God, or that His principles of reason cannot abide. Indeed, rational thought would be impossible without permanency of meaning. Through His dynamic action, God constantly reproduces identical principles in His thought with the passage of time. Time does not exist *sui generis* as something independent and external to God. God creates time by His change. Since He is Infinite Becoming, only He is the pure measure of time. God's principles of reason continuously exist, because they are constantly reproduced by His creative action.

In reality, the person who was John yesterday is not the *same* John today. Nor was yesterday's thought that two and

two make four the *same* thought as we think today. Since yesterday, John has changed. John's existence is a continuously dynamic process of action. Also, our thought is a ceaselessly dynamic process of change. We do not really think the *same* thought at different times. We simply reproduce at different times thoughts that are identical in meaning. Meaning cannot exist outside of thought, and two plus two could never make four if God did not guarantee it by the infinitely intelligent action which is His Being.

A person may stare constantly at a certain table, and close his eyes, then open them and look at the table again. He may say, "Now look at this table, and see with your own eyes that it does not change. See that it is the same table from time to time." But the person's perception of the table as non-changing actually is only a convenient illusion. For scientific analysis reduces the table to a process of action which is constant change. The table under analysis is reduced to electrons, protons, etc., which are only convenient terms that describe dynamic processes of action. Some action "out there" interacts with the perceiving agent to constantly reproduce identical effects in the perceiving mind. The table has meaning because it *seems* to be the *same* table from time to time. But in reality, it is never the *same* table at all. For there is no sameness in the world ever. Meaning is possible only because action reproduces identical effects. If it were possible that two tables could exist exactly alike, then they would not in reality be the *same* table, simply because two different things cannot be one. The two tables would be *different* tables, and they would be identical only in meaning. Meaning is never the *same*, but is only identical, as new and different thought is always produced by dynamic action or change. The term "sameness" has meaning only if we say that something is the same as itself, or that something *is*

what it *is*. To say that a thing is identical to another thing is to say that it corresponds in likeness or meaning to the other thing. But it is not the *same* as the other thing, for the simple reason that it is *not* the other thing, because it is only itself. That two different things can be the *same* thing is altogether unthinkable.

Earlier in this work I stated that God's love is immutable. Saying this, I simply meant that His love is never absent and never ceases. God's love is dynamic, as it takes an infinite variety of forms in His Infinite Becoming. In the act of creation, God's love is manifested in change. Indeed, God's love *is* that change. Action is change, and God's love is shown in His action. Traditional thinkers have argued desperately that God is omnipotent; yet by making Him static being they would make Him impotent.

To deny that God is Infinite Becoming is to delimit His greatness. It is to make Him the terminus of possibility, and to make Him the end that never began, which is wholly implausible. To picture God as static being is to equate His greatness with man's depraved desire to escape the responsibility of facing loneliness in eternal becoming.

Loneliness is that which can become, but not yet is; yet it is also that which can never become, because there is no end to becoming. Or more clearly stated, a person is lonely insofar as he has yet to become all that which it is possible for him to be. As there is no end to the possibilities of what he can become in eternity, there is no end to his loneliness. Dealing with lonesomeness as a symptom of loneliness, psychology must unite with ethics on this metaphysical foundation to understand what lonesomeness means. Dealing with lonesomeness without this understanding has been the cause of many psychoanalytic failures in dealing with loneliness. The disappearance of the symptoms of sadness and languor

has falsely indicated the disappearance of loneliness itself. Those who are "well adjusted" or associate agreeably with others, and appear to be free from mental conflict, are judged to be free from loneliness and seldom find their way into psychiatric parlors. The concern of the psychoanalyst is self-dissension, or how to free his subject from the loss of mental and physical energy due to conflicting impulses and desires. It is considered that once these conflicts are removed, the subject is adjusted to himself and to society. The fact of his adjustment is indicated by the absence of symptoms of conflict or suffering.

The psychological symptoms of loneliness often are absent in persons who suffer the most dismal loneliness possible. The *no-others* person may be preoccupied in his pursuits, and be apparently well adjusted in himself, as he appears to be free from conflicting purposes. He may show few signs of sadness or boredom in his behavior. But the absence of these symptoms, which would make his loneliness apparent to others, does not indicate the absence of loneliness by a true definition. The *no-others* person is alone from others, because he is incapable of truly experiencing the presence of others. There must be an intercommunion, a genuinely mutual sharing of selves before there can be an escape from aloneness. It may be said that the *no-others* shows no need to share the selfness of others. But the fact that he does not show the need does not disprove the presence of the need. People need health instead of sickness; we need love instead of enmity, and wisdom instead of ignorance. But we frequently disrespect these needs; in fact, we often behave as though they were unreal. It is a common philosophical precept that people need to revere life, pursue wisdom, and love others as much as themselves. The denial or neglect of these needs does not cancel their reality. It

simply guarantees fixation at a given level of loneliness in him in whom the needs exist.

The *no-others* heart really needs others. But he can experience others only in the role which they play in the fulfillment of his private ends. He misses the beauty of sharing others as they are in themselves. Because they are objects to his private ends, instead of subjects in a communion of selves, he is alone from them, and is lonely in his aloneness. He usually is not aware of his loneliness, and this is the tragedy of his life. The lonely man who is aware of his privation may pursue escape out of it. But where there is no awareness, there can be no escape.

The *no-others* person is uninhibited, and is incapable of realizing the sacred rights of other selves. If he experiences any inhibitions at all, then they are calculated inhibitions designed to manipulate others by pleasing others. His practice of social amenities is only a means to achieve his self-centered aims. However, it is a psychiatric commonplace that expressions of *no-others* character are found in normal persons. It is probably a fiction that a totally selfish person ever existed. The difference between the pure *no-others* and the "pure saint" or "mature man" is psychologically conceived as a range of degrees. In normal persons the motive of self-enhancement is present at all times; but it is recognized as egoistic only when it is expressed in socially unacceptable form. Actually, every self is self-seeking. Every self is egocentric, sees the world through the subjective mirror of its private eyes, and strives in some manner to enhance itself. It is not the principle of self-enhancement that is morally wrong. Every self is entitled to fulfillment. Each of us needs to love more and to be loved more. Each needs to esteem himself, broaden himself, and exalt himself. It is only the practice of wrong style in self-enhancement

that is morally wrong. To exalt the self by abasing others is unacceptable style, because it ignores the same need in others for exaltation. Egoism is the man who raises himself to look down on others. Altruism is the man who raises himself and raises others with him. Altruism is fraternal egoism; and the martyr who supposedly would exalt others by extinguishing himself is a moral distortion and a psychological fiction. If Our Lord had never been raised from the dead, then His sacrifice would have been morally meaningless. God will not permit the vanquishment of any person who endures pain for the sake of goodness.

No person can long to die solely for the sake of others. A study of the motives of suicidal martyrs reveals only a longing for change, never a genuine longing for self-annihilation. No person can destroy himself because he prefers non-existence to existence. It is not possible that a self can long to cease longing entirely, or long for death. One can long only to become something that he has not yet become, to do something that he has not yet done, or to have something that he has not yet had. It is true that one can long for a prolongation of what he now is, or is now doing, or now has. And one can long for what he has been, done, or had in the past. But it is not true that one can experience a desire to end all desire, or long to experience a complete absence of longing. One can long for freedom from exorbitant anxiety, and for escape from restrictions and pain. But to long at all is to long for something in reality, because it is not possible to long for nothing or nothingness. In psychoanalytic literature it has been argued that the self carries within it a longing for death. To verify this notion, one would have to show that it is possible to long to experience the inexperienceable, or to sense the insensible. For if this

world is intelligible, then all action is for something, and is never for nothing.

To say that an acting agent would act for nothing or nothingness is plainly a contradiction. For if a person were acting for nothing or nothingness, then why would he *act* at all? That an acting agent can come from nothing is wholly implausible, and that it would convert itself into nothing is equally implausible. If a person could have a purpose to end all purpose, then in the first place why should he bother to even have this purpose? That an acting agent should *act* to entirely cease acting is inconsonant with a logical rationale of the nature of an act. The very nature of the acting agent is to *act*; and action can produce only action, never an end to action. That an acting agent would act to negate his own action is a mere *jeu de mots*. We act for different effects, but we always act, and action is always *for* some effect that is real.

Freudian psychoanalytic theory assumes the existence of opposing agents in the acting organism. According to this theory, in every self there is a force which if not carefully guarded will reduce the self to non-existence. The personal urge in the self to life conflicts with an impersonal urge in the self to death. The self evolves out of the world's impersonal force, and this force continues to act within the self to eventually reduce the personality to nothingness.

The weakness of this Freudian assumption is its conflict of principles which is characteristic of all forms of dualism or impersonalism. In contrast to the Freudian view, that a moral agent can be stricken with conflicting *life* urges is not a dualism, because the opposition of right and wrong in a free agent is a necessity of moral reason. Right and wrong are expressions only of good and less-good, as the acting

agent always acts for what it at the time regards either consciously or unconsciously to be a real good. A person ridden with conflicting life urges may act to escape the frustration of conflict, or to desensitize himself to pain. But he acts only to annihilate the painfulness of conflicts in conscious thought, not to annihilate himself as an acting agent. A person who commits suicide does not long for death. He longs only for a change in the conditions of his living. The conditions of his living at the time of his suicide are experienced as unbearable; and he "takes his life" to escape from anxiety and pain. He does not long to cease being. He simply longs for a more rewarding life, which presently he deems himself unable to find in this world. The studies of suicides reveal sundry motives for taking one's life; but all are motives that represent a form of self-seeking, never a longing to cease existing.

In every self there is a need for self-exaltation. The saint and the martyr who mortify the carnal desires of the self seek to exalt the self in a glorious love union with God. Sensual and secular pleasures are denied with the purpose of experiencing a yet higher kind of pleasure, namely, the spiritual pleasure of communion with The Divine.

Anthropologists have described a New Mexico Indian society in which the practice of self-abnegation has been a lasting social rule. Mass meekness, long-suffering patience, and soft-spoken modesty have been traits of almost every member of the Zuni Indian community. Instead of competition, there has been economic, social, and religious co-operation. And in place of a compulsion to out-do others, there has been a general pattern of self-containment.

Howbeit, the need for self-exaltation in this culture is manifest in the very denial of it. To abnegate the self in conformance to a social pattern is to insure the acceptance of

the self in that social setting. Self-neglect is the true pattern of self-abnegation; and conformance to any social pattern at all represents a motive of self-preservation. It is hardly likely that a society of true individuals could exist in which no one desired to deviate from custom. When one desires to deviate, but does not deviate, conformance can be explained in terms of fear. The individual conforms, because he is afraid that if he does not conform he will lose his status or lose his life. Too serious a deviation from rules may cost him his existence. Less serious deviations may cost him only the pain of social rejection. It cannot be questioned that every person needs social status. Everyone needs a feeling of importance, individual worthiness, and social belonging. Everyone needs to grow in wisdom, expand his experience of love and beauty, and enhance his joy in social living. Every self needs exaltation. The ideal of exaltation is to exalt the self through exalting society.

The ethical philosophy which goes by the name of hedonism has been very realistic in its analysis of human needs. The purpose of life is pleasure; and altruistic hedonism asserts that a perpetual enhancement of the joy of social living is the true goal of creation. Self-exaltation is synonymous to the fulfillment of this purpose; and religious hedonism believes that a cooperative exaltation of selves was the purpose of God in creating His children.

Jesus did not teach that self-denial and poverty should be practiced for the sake of oppressing the self. That He taught self-abnegation as an end in itself is nowhere indicated in the scriptures. Jesus said that a man should love his neighbor as much as himself; but he did not say that a man should not love himself also. That Our Lord aimed at the exaltation of man is evident in His promise of preparing for him a mansion in God's kingdom. He spoke of man's union

with God as one of glory, in which joy and peace would pass all understanding.

In an earlier chapter we saw that a complete self is morally impossible, that in its search for fruition the self can realize its purpose only by properly relating to other selves. If I may repeat an earlier observation, no person can experience another person as the other experiences himself privately. One can share experience that is common to another; but one cannot become another, or feel and know another as the other feels and knows himself. Yet, it is only through the sharing of selves in common experience that the discovery of moral meaning in oneself is possible. Moral self-awareness is acquired only through the experience of a loving relation to others. Come what may or will, a man must live socially. He can exalt himself only if he is interested also in exalting others. His fructification in loneliness is possible only by sharing his fruits with others.

In describing the loneliness of the *no-others* person, I have pointed out that it is not usually obvious that he is very lonely. His loneliness is little expressed symptomatically, because sadness in hunger for others basically is a reaction of the person whose attachment to others is moral. The loneliness of the *no-others* person is the fact of his emptiness. He misses the satisfaction of mutually sharing the lives of other persons. He misses their joys, their love, and the moral beauty of sharing their suffering. His distorted conception of others keeps depth in his communion with others outside his reach.

Unfortunately, it is not generally realized how much the *no-others* character is present in the normal person. The average person is probably genuinely attached to a few others, feels strongly toward them, and experiences an alleviation of loneliness in their presence. But only a blind

man could say that the average person in our culture is properly related to other people in general. Most of us are frequently selfish in our relations to our loved ones, and often are *no-others* at heart in our indifference to persons outside our own social circles. The white man in the South is *no-others* toward the Negro. The residents of Easy Street are *no-others* toward Skid Row's beggars. The average salesman in our culture is *no-others* in character toward the average buyer.

It is not the loneliness of the average man in our culture today that is tragic. Loneliness *per se* is not a tragic phenomenon, since it is inevitable and essential to life. What is tragic is the lack of awareness of the loneliness, and the contentment within it. That a man *must* be lonely before he can seek others and fructify in loneliness is a first principle of life. Loneliness is good when it is sufficiently painful to cause a desire to grow, to cause a search for values that will result in the exaltation of the self. The tragedy of our culture today is its blindness to its loneliness, the vast emptiness in the unreflective masses who subsist under the guise of social adjustment.

Modern psychopathology and psychoanalysis has contributed largely to mass loneliness by making it theoretically necessary or scientifically honorable. The watchword of the science of psychology today is "adjustment." People are popularly considered to be free from loneliness when they are "adjusted," and to be lonely when they are "maladjusted." The adjusted person is he who is accepted socially, conforms to fashion and taste, uses language palatable in his chosen circles, and in general behaves in a manner condoned by his peers. He does not express thoughts that are not commonly approved. He does not do what is not commonly done. He does not express feelings that are not

commonly felt. He has fun at parties, laughs at what others consider to be funny, shows interest in what others find interesting, and does not spend too much time alone. He watches television with regularity, does not discuss religion in the barbershop, and seeks advice from experts on how to live. He seeks advice from his minister on how to live righteously, advice from a physician on how to live healthily, and advice from a counselor on how to stay happily married. For all his needs he finds prepackaged advice already professionally and popularly sanctioned. He is married to one of his own race and educational and economic status. It is imperative that he be accepted in society; and every other smile that he smiles is designed to insure acceptance by the peer authorities on propriety. It is imperative that he be liked, and if adherence to static thinking and social rituals is a requisite to being liked—then he will be liked.

He is sensitive to the stigma which inheres in the word "loneliness" as it is commonly used in our culture today. He seldom will go to a movie alone unless he is in a larger city, for fear that his acquaintances might see him alone and decide that his existence is "lonely." He knows he fears that people might conclude that he is a lonely fellow. He thinks that they might say, "Look there at Jones. He must be a lonely man, for he cannot find himself a mate or companion."

All people are lonely; but aloneness in our culture generally suggests social incompetency, and a stigma is placed upon being frequently seen alone in public. The average man in America is not only afraid of aloneness, but he is also a snob. He likes to avoid contact in public with persons who are stigmatized for their loneliness. He will not admit that he is a snob, for snobbery itself is a social stigma; and for this reason, he feels compelled to achieve inobtrusiveness

in the manner of his snobbery. In his romance life, he likes to avoid dating girls whom the group has branded as unsophisticated and homely. Such is usually the case even if in his private judgment the girl is beautiful and decent. The average person's treatment of individuals is determined largely by group opinion.

Howbeit, modern technology has created changes in transportation and occupations which in advanced countries like America has led to a dynamic intermingling of cultures. There are many different regional manners of behavior, and a great variety of social, philosophic, and economic patterns. The result has been the development of an attitude of tolerance toward persons whose manners and beliefs are different. A synthesis of contrasting cultures has occurred in which there is an acceptance of personal differences to a certain point; but a polite ostracism awaits persons whose differences go beyond that point. A woman may wear a dress that is different than any other dress in existence, and may be praised for exhibiting taste in her achievement of distinction. But the same dress, cut four inches shorter or longer, could be worn by the same woman, and such a lack of conformance to social ritual would be the beginning of her banishment.

An atmosphere of tolerance in America makes it possible for people to subsist in their differences so long as they abstain from aggression. The sophisticated person is able to "adjust" by behaving differently at different times among different people. The greatest paradox of America is the presence of the principle of tolerance, the principle of conformance, and the principle of individual distinction working simultaneously to confuse individuals to distraction. One has to conform to belong. Yet one has to be different to belong properly in a competitive culture. And one has to

be tolerant of naiveté, of the failure of others to conform and to differ properly. At a common social gathering we can see an atheist, a Catholic, a Mormon, and a Buddhist conforming and being different, and tolerating each other's differences.

But the social requisite of all individuals is that they "adjust" in their differences, or else be stigmatized as eccentrics, and be shunned from common circles. A bachelor, for example, may subsist in a circle of married friends; but an expert on history, if he prefers to dress in overalls, cannot teach in a public school, any more than a robed minister can subsist as a missionary in a den of gamblers. There is no individual alive who can go into any group at any time and be warmly accepted. American society is a great order of antagonistic orders. The nation contains a great variety of societies, religions, economies, and living patterns. Regional and locally distinct rituals thrive within an amalgamated national spirit that rises above factional elements. Yet if America were divided into fifty nations, the people's amalgamated spirit would desist overnight. Americans cohere in political oneness, and have a philosophy of tolerance which annuls the disgrace of most of their differences, but their differences are far more severe than they appear to be under the light of the national spirit. America is full of lonely people. You need only to visit a single city. Live and talk with the people. Watch them closely. The loneliness of individuals cannot be concealed.

The average American is only remotely a true self. He lives in a culture in which more thought has been devoted to individualism than in any other country. And there are, perhaps, more true individuals in America than in any other nation. Yet the average American is a remarkably exemplary

study in loneliness, a loneliness which is perhaps the most curious kind of isolation of man from himself.

The average American probably would never admit that he is very lonely. His criterion of what constitutes loneliness is itself a symptom of his isolation from himself, and indicates his lack of awareness of his own loneliness. When he is called on to define loneliness, he usually equates it with lonesomeness, or describes it as a state of awareness of separation from others. He is intimidated by much solitude. He quells the dreadfulness of his own emptiness when he is alone by filling his brain with the noises of a television set or a radio. It seldom occurs to him that a state of separation from others can mean a closer attachment to others through contemplating their meaning in solitude and silence. He is afraid to be alone very long. Solitude isolates him from others, who are a substitution for the poor company he makes for himself. In his aloneness he has little to offer himself that is rewarding. He is frightened by his own emptiness. He is nervous. He lacks inner sanctuaries. He does not really know how to meditate, or how to dream and pray. One may ask many persons how they pray, and it is tragic how few individuals will be able to even discuss this question earnestly.

Now let us observe the daily life of a quite typical American administrative official. In the morning, when he arises, this man begins a pattern of behavior rituals which control his life until his work day is over. If he loves his wife, he may utter some creative things to her over the breakfast table. Just as a change from routine, he may say something to her that he has never said before. This morning he may feel a heartwarming urge to say something special that will make her feel like a unique person. Or—most likely

he will not. He will just read his morning newspaper, to the background of a variety of radio tunes, and, after looking at his watch ten times, walk from his house to the commuters' depot without an exalting thought in his head. Salutary conversation in the commuter car is ritual, as these strangers will always remain strangers to him; and by the time he reaches his office still no rapture has entered his head.

During his day at work, he practices a personalization with his associates and secretaries that is half intimate and half formal, half sincere and half cunning. His relations with his superiors are also half sincere and half *no-others*. He must ingratiate with them; yet he must retain his integrity, but adhere to his position. He must be friendly with them, yet not too friendly. Numerous conferences ensue in the office, as usual; and in these settings his sense of selfness is stifled, as the consciousness of himself as "I" becomes the consciousness of the group as "We." Every day it is essentially the same routine. The results of his work are not measurable as a creative, personal moral achievement. His work is often not even his own work. It is the work of an oversocialized "I," a mechanical "I," which has taken the place of the real "I" that is moribund with a frustrated need to work at something else. He needs to create personally, to achieve morally, and to accomplish an awareness of a unique "I" as the true producing self. The conferences in which the "I" of self-awareness is drowned are never ending. The "I" sits with others as committee members around a table. Often there is an atmosphere of false self-control by artificial inhibitions, as true leader-impulses are watered down in the name of democratic cooperation. Under the pressure of an excess public relations consciousness, the "I" of honor becomes a counterfeit "I." Everybody is aware, but nobody

mentions—that one must *never* be conspicuous in his ambitions. One must *never* be obtrusive in his recommendations. One must *never* be excessive in his criticism and objections. One must be a Middle Man. For only the Middle Man can survive. The half sincere personalization and co-operation is perennial. The misplacement and distortion of the self in a set of half others, half *no-others* living circumstances economically determined is a common American phenomenon.

It is not American only, but it is, perhaps, most truly American, because of our extensive industry in which so many work situations exist that sap creative moral energy. More often than not, the worker is not doing what he really longs to do. He is not becoming what he really needs and longs to be. He knows that work is drudgery if it is not performed with his heart, that it depresses his enthusiasm for life. When he comes home to his family in the evening, he is fortunate if they can resuscitate his spirit enough that he may do justice to their needs. It is not possible that he can entirely avoid carrying over half sincere work habits into his personal life. It is probable that they will strain his personal relations, as the habit of false personalization in work affects the sincerity of his relations in leisure and play.

He is apt to complain of dissatisfaction in his work, and deprecate the character of his employer or supervisors. What he lacks in courage to say in their presence he is apt to say privily to others. He will then in his conscience charge himself with insincerity for misrepresenting the character of himself and others, and feelings of guilt will hamper his freedom for true self-expression in play. Fear of being discovered in dishonesty tends to more dishonesty. Because of his lack of courage to be honest in his speech at work, he may suffer nervous tension that is *mal apropos* to

the relaxation of play. To hide from his own family his insincerity in his relations to others at work, he will deceive them by giving misrepresentative accounts of his character at work, or else he will cower in silent self-suppression and timidity. He thinks that he stands to lose financially by speaking his mind to his supervisors or superiors, perhaps even to his subordinates. But if he does not speak his mind, then he stands to lose ultimately by his lack of moral courage. He underestimates the respect that people would have for him if he would exhibit true candor.

He is lonely for work in which he can place his heart. He is lonely for creative, moral achievement which he can measure personally. He is lonely to be a true self.

Since the concern of the present chapter is personal autonomy, or what it means to be a true self, I shall delineate some of the negative characteristics of the average American, in order to demonstrate the weakness of his moral autonomy, or his lack of awareness of the inadequacy of his selfhood. My reference to the average American is not a comparative reference in terms of national characters. The loneliness of the average American is probably similar in general respects to the loneliness of the people in most other countries. For example, our material standard of living is without question the highest in the world; but it does not follow necessarily that our material longings have been quelled or excited any more or less than the material longings of the people of other nations. To acquire physical objects may create a habit of acquisitiveness, may set off an insatiable greed to acquire more and more. But it does not do so necessarily; and that it has done so only to Americans, or that we have become the world's loneliest people in unsatisfied greed, is a questionable indictment with which I am not concerned in this book. If it were true

that we were the world's greediest nation, then we probably also would be the world's loneliest nation, for the simple reason that the acquisitive urge expresses loneliness as much as any other symptom. However, the urge to acquire may express itself in many different directions. The vigor of the acquisitive urge may be a healthy sign, depending on what it is that is sought. For example, to pursue wealth for its own sake, with the mistaken notion that a possession of money represents personal merit, obviously is both morally and psychologically a condemnable urge. But a person may desire to acquire moral and emotional wealth, knowledge, and integrity; and it is this kind of acquisitiveness with which we are presently concerned in our analysis of loneliness.

Convenient for analysis, the United States is middle class at large, and as I apply the following negative observations to its character, I am aware of many positive characteristics which are beside the immediate point. Observation is confined to the middle class, with an awareness of many exceptions, but with a conviction that the same facts apply to fewer members of the other classes.

To begin, it will be in order to explain the *kind* of loneliness which is now in concern. The everlasting, most urgent problem of every man is how to express himself truly, how to respect his real needs, or how to be a full self. The failure to overcome any level of loneliness is the result of wrong self-expression, wrong self-seeking, or wrong self-understanding. It has been indicated already that a person is never responsible for all of his loneliness. Indeed, his very existence is sustained by a principle of eternal loneliness that can never be subdued, for the simple reason that it is essential to his existence as a moral self. We are presently concerned with those levels of loneliness that can and must be con-

quered now, I mean, the fruitless acquiescence in the loneliness that plagues man when he is fixated contentedly at a level of life that is morally unprogressive.

The average American's effort to conquer loneliness is petty. His criterion of personal autonomy is basically the conformist one of compliance with the standard of living of the legendary Jones's. The standard is primarily physical and secular in its demands, such as driving an up-to-date automobile, living in a house with commodities that provide a steadily rising comfort, and dressing one's body according to currently acceptable style. Attendance at a church is not so much in demand as the manner in which one dresses his body and his house. Nor is a command over the English language as socially advantageous as a command over his income.

The average American learns early in his life to respect the principles of personal autonomy. He is neither dangerously conformist nor individualist in his relations to others. American magazines, books, and graduation lectures abound with reminders that conformance is dangerous. Americans realize that the ultimate saviors of personal liberty are individuals whose moral autonomies remind the conformists that they are over-conforming. Americans deplore social over-control, and respect individuals who resist conformance patterns that could lead to the establishment of a *no-others* dominion. However, it is questionable that the average American is saved from *no-others* control by the strength of his own moral efforts. His respect for moral autonomy in others does not imply that he possesses a praiseworthy autonomy in himself. It happens that, on the contrary, he has only a proud illusion of it, which justifies to his satisfaction his notion that he is a free person living in a free society.

It is not at all clear to the average American exactly what it is that makes a person free. That he is free from oppression by a *no-others* power is clear. It is also clear that he enjoys much liberty to plot his own destiny. It is clear that he can strive to enlarge his income, purchase a finer home and automobile, and send his children to a better school. But he is blind to the fact that his conception of liberty is deceptively shallow. He is enslaved to a kind of happiness seeking which conforms to a socio-economic standard that is half *no-others* in character. He is enslaved to the illusion that his moral and intellectual standard is basically adequate. A man does not gain freedom merely by loosing himself of external strings. True liberty is not only an independence *from* something. It is the willingness to *do* something in the face of problematical challenge. Freedom is an awareness of the possibility and necessity of achieving greater fruition of one's spiritual and moral needs. It is an awareness of a need for growth, for self-realization. It is a willingness to *act*, to realize oneself by effort. For if one is neither aware of a need to grow, nor willing to grow, then he is enslaved to the dormancy of himself. I should not want to imply that the average American is too naive to sense that this is true. But it is quite evident that if he does sense it, then he behaves very little in accordance to it. He takes a very trifling advantage of his knowledge of the nature of his freedom.

The average American is free to acquire far more knowledge, integrity, and depth in his experience of life than he is willing to exert himself to acquire. Concerning his pursuit of wisdom, he is complacent in most of his political and philosophical convictions, which are few in number, hazy in conception, dogmatic, and only superficially examined in the light of reason. He respects the principle of respecting

truth. Yet, even if he is a college graduate, he exerts little effort to analyze the dogmas that he has inherited from his family and church. A genuine pursuit of truth is *painful*. It requires constant self-criticism, as well as the very trying task of critically reflecting on the beloved dogmas that persons have taught us are sacred. To reject any dogmas instilled in us by loving persons may result in our unconsciously identifying the dogmas with the persons. That is, if we reject the dogmas considered sacred by our loved ones, then unconsciously we may think that we are rejecting our loved ones, and consequently suffer the problem of dealing with guilt in our search for truth. We inherit certain attitudes, conceptions, or ways of thinking and feeling from influential persons in our childhood and adolescence. We use these habits as tools to make our thinking and feeling cohere securely from day to day. As instruments for dealing with problems, answering questions, and relieving the anxiety of uncertainty about things that matter, these beliefs or habits become the foundation of our emotional security. For us to seriously doubt or reject them is to pull the roots of our comfort. It is to thrust us into a world of uncertainty, anxiety, and intellectual and emotional jeopardy.

Every person who has ever acquired a truly valuable principle to live by has confirmed it by his own rational effort, or else he has never really acquired it at all. Principles handed to us by the grace of indoctrination are never fully possessed until we examine them critically, until we make them our own principles by an honest rational decision. To interrupt the comfort of inherited beliefs, or the security of dogmas instilled in us by beloved persons, requires that we pursue truth for its own sake, and face the risk of missing truth in a groping search through the uncertainties of investigative thought. Only a man obsessed with intellectual

honor can obtain truths that are really worth defending. He may miss many truths; or he may retain inherited truths; but his truths become truly his own, as they acquire that special value which only truths discovered in honest intellectual struggle can reward.

The average person in our culture is an intellectual anemic. He subscribes to noble maxims about the value of truth, and about the value of ardency in the pursuit of truth. But his application of these adopted maxims is so shallow and infrequent that he is entitled only to an indictment for paltry concern for truth. For example, he believes in God, but he does not really care greatly whether God exists, or at least not greatly for what His existence means. If God's existence really mattered greatly to him, then he would practice a pursuit of knowledge in which the discovery of God's purpose would have ever deeper significance. He would practice a kind of meditation in which his relation to God in daily living would acquire ever deeper meaning. The fact that he feels little urgency in his relation to God is shown by the mechanical emptiness of his religious rituals. His attendance at church is regular; and perhaps (though it is very doubtful) even his personal prayer is regular. But if he prays with regularity, then his prayer is generally mechanical, dutiful, and only as deep as the sense of urgency that lies behind it as a conditioned habit. If his prayers were more earnest, they would have a greater influence in the upliftment of his character.

The chief characteristic of the true self is the fact that his thought is his own thought. His ideas need not always be original, because originality is no criterion for the value or validity of ideas. But his ideas are examined, evaluated, then accepted or rejected by a responsible intellectual decision that follows honest critical searching. A person can

escape much loneliness through intellectual honor. Concern for truth means the rewarding experience of having something noble to do. He who really longs for truth finds the pursuit of new truths exciting. Pursuit is as satisfying as the discovery of truth itself. For the joy of pursuit means escape from the loneliness of indolent living.

Indifference to truth, especially to its application in creative social living, is a direct consent to a great deal of our loneliness. Because we are only pettily concerned with truth, the time which we could spend in its pursuit is spent in languor, or in the empty repetition of habitual ways of thinking and acting. Languor is precisely a need for new and deeper experience. The common person in our culture has little conception of higher and finer ways to relieve his boredom. For every man in a library, there are dozens of men wasting their spiritual and intellectual resources in billiard parlors. For every man who thinks persistently, there are dozens of men who think only sporadically. The exploration and exchange of ideas should be a common social event; but it is not, and it never has been, for the simple reason that only a few persons in every thousand have acquired a knowledge of the fact that it is a pleasure to think. Much conversation in our culture shows great shallowness of thinking, as it occurs solely to relieve the anxiety of silence. A great deal of it is insincere, uncontrolled, and repetitious of trivial nonsense, not to mention how much is uttered that is false and malicious.

Our care for greatness in the search for truth is generally niggardly. We comply practically with the mistaken notion that ignorance is bliss, as ignorance in human beings means a lack of facility for relieving loneliness. We often suffer a lack of interest in life. Or at least, we spend uncountable hours in mental and emotional idleness, which means that

we are lonely and insufficiently aware of our loneliness. For if we were sufficiently aware, then we should seek in action the fruits of life that are lost in idleness. To spend much time in idleness, or to live languidly in unvaried routines, is to deprive ourselves of depth in our experience of living. Enhancing the depth of our experience of living is the only moral justification for being alive. The self-realization of a person is God's purpose in creating and sustaining a person.

Probably half the effort in our lives is spent in avoiding real living. We look at empty television programs, and grow sleepy long before it is yet the hour to grow sleepy. We listen to vapid, over-repeated, machine produced music to the point of fixating or deadening our appreciation. The desire for beauty is stifled, our quest for it is impoverished long before we realize that our daily monotonies deprive us of greatness in living. I do not say that the people in our culture constantly choose poor television programs, or listen to machine-repeated music always indiscriminately. The point is that a great person succeeds in living with depth in his feeling and thought most all the hours of his life. The average person in our culture does not desire to be great, and he is frightened by much depth in thought. He pursues truth usually only when he is compelled to do so for social advantage; and he acts as though he is contented with a life that is only half beautiful, half true, and half lived.

He often listens to unsavory talk about others, or talk which at least is morally objectionable, because it is prompted by ulterior motives. He often sits through insipid films, reads insipid books, and listens contentedly and uncritically to insipid sermons. He often suffers a lack of awareness that his life is being insipidly lived. The tragedy of his life is the fact that he is not more bored by his boredom. He does not realize the triviality of his triviality. He is rest-

less when he is alone; but he seldom finds a true relief from his restlessness, because he does not properly seek it. The morally autonomous person, who knows how to relate properly to others, can be alone and love his isolation. He can feel completely at home with himself when he is alone. His sense of wonder and awe, his love for thought, and his acute self-awareness make it possible for him to be alone and find gratification within himself. He is given to prayer, intellectual contemplation, and self-analysis. Because he is a working man of integrity and courage, and is relatively free from the anxiety of guilt, he is capable of rest.

In our approach to the autonomous man, let us now consider briefly three distinct types of lonely characters in our culture.

Firstly, let us look at the *under-others*. This person is hampered by debility to act, lack of confidence in himself, and over dependence on other persons. His dependence on others for approval and admiration often reaches neurotic painfulness, because he has never learned how to properly love and respect himself. The man who possesses sufficient esteem of himself does not concede himself morally for acceptance by others. He desires approval from others, and their love and homage; but to discover that he is not loved by others does not result in his neglecting or rejecting himself. He wants others, needs them, and tries to establish with them a loving relation. But if they do not accept him, then he looks to values within himself for the sustenance of himself.

Moral and social despair is in the last analysis self-rejection. The knowledge that others have rejected a person can lead him to despair only if he rejects himself. The person who is prone to self-reproach when he is neglected by others lacks inner resources. He lacks value to himself, inner worth,

a conviction of his own importance. His loneliness is not only that of isolation from others; it is estrangement from himself. His loneliness is the most demoralizing kind of anguish that it is possible to experience. A prolonged suffering of such self-estrangement can lead to insanity, or, perhaps even worse, to an insipid existence of association with others by way of self-concession to others. The only avoidance of social insipidity is the acquisition of values in the self for the self, meaning in the self for the self, and the courage to truly represent the self in the trial of social living. The *under-others* is burdened with hollowness of spirit, gloomy dependence, and want of pride. In our culture, the average person probably experiences this loneliness abundantly in his youth, and senses its painfulness in adulthood more than he is willing to admit.

Now secondly, let us look at the *beyond-others*. This is the lonely character whose traits appear to be the opposite of those just described. This person acknowledges little dependence on others for the enhancement of his joy of living. Whether or not he expresses pride in himself, he probably regards his personal autonomy as moral autonomy; and he appears to be free from normal symptoms of loneliness in his apparent self-sufficiency. He associates little with others. He expresses little need for praise and admiration from others. Almost invariably he is an intellectual, and appears to seek in intellectual pursuit what most people seek in relation to other persons, namely, escape from the loneliness of private existence. He may be religious, and may act as though he is seeking in God what he has largely despaired of finding in his fellow man. Or he may be an atheist, acting as though he has despaired of finding any great rewards either in God or in man. The average American, *Deo gratias*, does not fit into this description; and he is aware that in

false self-sufficiency there is hidden loneliness, cynicism, and conceit.

Thirdly, there is the *echo-others*. This person's loneliness is prevalent in the masses of our middle class. If I may add to some previous description of him, he is the average American, who is not morbidly dependent on others, and who is a lukewarm adherent to principles of honesty and faith. Though he would not admit it, he is much more afraid of losing his employment and social status than he is afraid of losing his moral status. Out of his employment and social insecurity he makes moral concessions. He does many things that he does not want to do. He accepts much of life that he does not want to accept. He behaves frequently in a manner inconsonant with his nature—to hold his position, to switch his rung on the latter of mode, and to fit tidily in an order and conception that is levied by others. He goes to church, and avows a belief in God; but he lacks the courage to act as though God really exists.

When God really has place in the conscience of a person, in the motives which govern the action of that person, the desire to fulfill God's will comes first. The person for whom God exists spends much of his time enhancing his love-knowledge union with Him. He devotes great effort to improve the moral meaning of himself; and as a consequence, his character moves other persons nearer to God. Greater nearness to God is an almost constant thought in the godly man's mind. His personal meaning and worth is in God. His security is in God. But—*facile princeps!* the *echo-others* does not seek to please God—he seeks to please others. Emulation of the character of Jesus (Whom this person feigns to love on Sunday mornings) is socially hazardous. To model himself after the personality of this Unusual Man would be embarrassing, inconvenient, ex-

tremely trying, and incompatible with mode. For the air of our culture is essentially and generally mundane and secular. Owing to this, to model himself after others is easier, more natural, convenient, and lucrative. In place of God, the *echo-others* seeks a more impressive house, income, raiment, and more intense secular excitement. He adheres to the standard of others, for fear of being secluded from others, because he thinks that others wish to fraternize with those of their own kind. He is afraid to express a love for God, before it is expressed by others, and only if it is expressed by others. Social decorum precedes morality; there is a time and a place for everything; and "religiosity" in a secular environment or mundane occasion is in bad taste. The average American is afraid to be the different person that a godly person must be. He is afraid to act truly and consistently as though God exists, for he is not wont to be considered odd.

The truly religious man makes no moral concessions for social security. It would not matter if he lost his position, reputation, and friends by being godly where godliness is not wanted. The price that persons pay for social security in moral abjectness is the loneliness of guilt over the loss of integrity. It is better to retain one's integrity and lose one's position than to sacrifice integrity and suffer the anxiety of self-reprehension. It has been said that Americans are the most candid and forthright people in the world. I should not assert whether this is true, as I am in no position to judge comparatively. But we must not play lightly with the truth. Between the American seeking for security in man and his affected seeking for security in God there is much hypocrisy. The moral concessions of the *echo-others* testify to the fact that he puts man before God, and that he lacks faith in God as a reliable source of security.

The extent to which a person achieves moral autonomy

depends greatly upon his conception of security. The autonomous person is free from the extremes of over dependence and false self-sufficiency, and lives by a realistic concept of the extent to which security can be achieved in his relations to others. His notion of the limitations of security is metaphysical. He knows that the estimation of his own autonomy must properly follow an estimation of the autonomy of God. If God did not exist, then there could be no security. But that God does exist, with a meaningful relation to man, means that the nature of His autonomy necessarily determines the possibilities of autonomy in man. In the following chapter we shall be concerned with the question of the autonomy of God, and with the ideal of autonomy in man. I shall outline a perspective on security which complies with a realistic psychology of the self, with a realistic understanding of the nature of loneliness, and with the inevitable limitations of man in his search for escape from loneliness. I shall attempt to organize in one viewpoint the concepts of loneliness, autonomy, and moral salvation. The traditional conception of salvation is burdened with many ambiguities and contradictions. It fails to understand the nature and meaning of loneliness, and does not realize the limited possibilities of autonomy both in man and in God. Before we consider the ideal of autonomy in the character of Jesus, let us briefly compare the character of the deep man with that of the shallow man in our culture today.

The deep man experiences affluent self-expression. He is a creative person filled with a sense of urgency in living. In the breadth and profundity of his inner wealth burns an intense fire of self-awareness. He has reverence for life, a sense of awe and wonder, and a sense of the reality and sacredness of human existence. It cannot be guaranteed that he is socially adjusted, because his personal integrity pre-

cedes social adjustment. Integrity permeates his mind and heart. He acts constantly to acquire knowledge to fulfill his need for knowledge. His passion for life, and his urge to live deeply and freshly, accompanies his natural need to live deeply. He longs and acts to grow. He wants to become a greater person. He never appeases the status quo.

Until we become aware of our half-commitment to life, our prosy purpose, and our intellectual and emotional narrowness, there is no hope that we can escape the illusion that heaven is a blissful state without responsibility. The salvation or exaltation of man depends on the existence of a good God. But man's faint contribution to his own cause, his cheap utilization of his creative capacity, and his addiction to half-living is the neglect of the foundation that man must build before even God can build. Every great philosopher has taught that man must awaken to his own self-oppression. Jesus besought man to achieve a proper care for himself, that he heed his real needs, and exhaustively exercise his capacity to live greatly. He called for a new birth of the spirit, a change of heart, a condition prior to which a progressive conquest of loneliness is impossible.

CHAPTER 7.

LONELINESS AND THE SUFFERING CARE OF JESUS

In our search for the meaning of loneliness to morality, we can study no life that is more revealing than the life of Jesus. The Gospel accounts of His life indicate that Jesus struggled with greater problems of loneliness than any other person in history. He was the One Man of history ever to claim that He cared for all humanity, that He wanted and was able to save every person from vain levels of loneliness and futile existence. Or to be more certain, Jesus was the One Man ever to make such a claim, then labor it out, *de die in diem*, throughout His life. Each of us cares for himself one way or another, and each of us cares for humanity one way or another. But usually we care greatly only for persons to whom we are immediately or intimately related, or persons whom we can imagine concretely. Our relatedness to humanity at large is practically a mere abstraction. Each of us is personally related to only a minute share of humanity;

we are selfish; and we do not care deeply even for most persons whom we see from day to day. We do not love ourselves properly; much less do we love our neighbors as ourselves. Because of our lack of mutual love, or our unwillingness to act it out in daily living, we are lonely persons, as we deprive ourselves of the joys of greater spiritual relatedness. Each of us is related to humanity as a whole. This relation is metaphysical and moral, and it is eternal. Only the whole is thoroughly meaningful. Being a part of the whole of humanity, every self is meaningful to itself only insofar as it is properly related to the whole of humanity and to God. The concern of God is a proper relatedness of all the members of His community. God strives to achieve a magnificent brotherhood among His children. Since He is the source of all meaning, a true relatedness to each other is possible only insofar as we are properly related to Him.

Because a proper relatedness of every person to humanity and to God has never been achieved, all men are lonely, and God is lonely. It has been a chief tenet of Christian ethics that escape from loneliness is possibly only through an acting out of proper love and care. It has been assumed that God has not created forever, but that He has created only a limited amount of children who form His community. If each of these children loved and cared properly for all others, through properly loving and caring for God, then everyone would possess a lasting security, a proper moral autonomy, and a gratifying and complete escape from loneliness. The Christian conception of the relatedness of selves imposes on us a dreadful sense of duty. Every person must very sincerely and deeply care for all other persons. If there remained only one lonely man in humanity, only one man improperly related to God, then

God and all humanity would be lonely because God and all humanity would long for a proper relatedness to that man.

Howbeit, the traditional Christian conception of salvation unfortunately contains some flaws in reason that have contributed to irresponsible thinking even in the most sincere believers. Even the most thoughtful religionists have believed that a heaven exists in which there is never a lack of proper relatedness between its members, and in which no person ever experiences any loneliness whatever. It is assumed that in His omnipotence, God is infinitely happy, and all persons who are delivered into heaven by His grace will rest eternally secure in an undisturbed bliss. In heaven, no person longs for anything, or desires or struggles for anything, because all saved persons will forever have and be all that they need to have and be. The completely saved person is he who has been delivered into this state of ecstasy by God's grace, and secured in it irrevocably.

The need for peace and security conduces easily to credence in this notion of heaven. We all grow tired of effort at times. We grow exhausted of thinking, of caring, and especially weary from failure, conflict, and suffering. In the painfulness of loneliness, we imagine a final, sweet, and complete escape from all loneliness. We recall the promise of Jesus of "the peace that passeth all understanding."

However, a little examination of our thought will show that we have distorted the meaning of Our Lord's promise of peace. A literal belief in a termination of all suffering and loneliness is inconsonant with the teachings of Jesus regarding moral care. There is nothing in Jesus' teachings to indicate that heaven is a state in which all effort ends. That in heaven a person automatically enjoys proper relatedness to God without effortful care is unrealistic thinking. Jesus did not do anything, and did not say anything to indicate that

in heaven there is no responsibility and struggle. On the contrary, we can safely deduce from all that He taught that persons will forever be capable of sin, in heaven or out of heaven, and that righteousness, joy, and peace can prevail only through acting out responsible love and care. Even in heaven a person can turn against God. He may turn against his own true needs, against himself, against others, and regress to a loneliness greater than he has ever experienced before. The legendary account of the Archangel Lucifer's fall from heaven well symbolizes eternal responsibility, and every person's freedom to neglect it or rebel against it.

In contemplating the joy and peace of heaven, we must keep in mind the higher righteousness of heaven, and hence the greater care and effort that is responsible for greater righteousness. Jesus said that we are given the keys of the kingdom, that "whatsoever shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever is let loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Heaven and earth are not categorically different orders that are unrelated. What is right and true for a man here and now is right and true for him anywhere always. The teachings of Jesus in their entirety imply that the kingdom of God is within us. As the Being of God sustains our being, it follows that we are inasmuch a part of His kingdom. But considering the evil that is also within us, the inference allows that being in the kingdom of God's righteousness is being godly in heart. We are in heaven already, to the extent that our thinking, feeling, and acting is godly. By the same premise, we are in hell already, insofar as we fail to practice a proper care for each other and for God. The notion that God's redemptive grace can lift us into an indefinite lull of moral endeavor is contrary to all that Jesus taught. It belies all moral sense. A man may believe that he can ask for forgiveness of his sins, and be re-

deemed of them by God's mercy, and then die, and eternally thereafter be saved from the responsibility of avoiding sin. But there are no principles to substantiate the notion that he can profit from this naive belief. The proper care of persons for persons, and of persons for God, will require effort forever. If persons could exist effortlessly in heaven incapable of sin, then God would have created men on earth incapable of sin. The fact that He created us able and free to sin, in light of the principle of His infinite morality, implies that He would not but create every person eternally responsible.

It must be that when the spirit of a man departs his body, it acquires greater power to act responsibly than while it was within his body. This would enable many persons to grow in spiritual and moral stature who were deprived on earth of the possibility of growth. Persons constitutionally incompetent mentally and physically, the morally inept, would then be free to strive for the joys of proper relatedness to others and to God. But of course, the same greater freedom to live responsibly would entail an equal freedom to live depravedly.

The scene of the temptations of Jesus by Satan symbolizes that even He, the Son of God, was free to do evil. Jesus could have turned against God, could have betrayed Him, could have wrought immeasurable evil in the world by wrongly using the power that God gave Him. The voice of God uttered, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But the Son was responsible freely and willfully; He could have rent in two the heart of God by diverting from His mission. The liability on His shoulders was that of the salvation of all men. It meant submission to a kind of suffering that no other person in history could measure in significance. The lot of Jesus was to exemplify responsible

care in the highest. To inspire us to love and to care properly for each other, Our Lord had to labor the most painful care, and suffer the abysmal loneliness that inhered naturally in His unrequited love.

Christian writers have greatly extolled the meaning and value of Christ's suffering on the Cross. That Jesus would suffer the most excruciating pain imaginable to teach men to love and to care is the essence of the persuasive power of the Christian doctrine. When men attempt sincerely to emulate the life of Jesus, their love and care for others reveals a light that should never go out. No life is as persuasive, as inspiring, as fruitful as a true Christian life; and when one man lives it genuinely, he communicates it to others. The deepest, most persistent needs in man are gratified in Christian living, and can be gratified equally in no other way. The unhappiness, pain, and loneliness experienced by Jesus in His sacrifice for men is proof of the magnanimity of God's care. In properly appreciating the suffering of Jesus, men become humiliated in their awareness of their own lack of care. They discover the dreadful significance of great care. They feel the painfulness and loneliness that may prevail in great care.

Our greatest need is to realize the reality of God's care for us. We need this realization for the courage we derive from it to care deeply, to struggle effortfully, and to live righteously. We need it for the assurance it gives us that our lives are meaningful, that we can live forever, that God will sustain us in our tribulations.

The traditional conception of salvation has failed to adequately understand the metaphysics of care. It has failed to understand the loneliness that inheres naturally in a moral order of related selves. Consequently, it has projected an effortless heaven, in which people are free from

any possible loneliness, which is an illusion that is easily accepted in naive thinking, but which is not conducive to the kind of moral conduct that exemplifies genuine veneration of God. If we believe that the power of God's grace can deliver us eternally from sin, by merely asking for forgiveness while we are yet free to sin, then we can easily avoid the effort that is required to live righteously through moral freedom. Above all, we do need God's forgiveness. His merciful indulgence in our weakness is the truest manifestation of His love for us. If God did not exist to forgive us of sin, then there could be no metaphysical basis to assume that sin is even real. Many atheists have asserted that morality is possible without God. And the behavior of some atheists has indicated a certain sincerity in this conviction. But none have explained how there could be an infinitely determined criterion of right from wrong without God. If God did not exist to infinitely substantiate moral meaning, then a metaphysical foundation for moral distinctions would be impossible. If God were not able to resolve our guilt, then a metaphysics of redemption from guilt would be impossible.

A chief virtue in the Christian conception of salvation is its belief in the destruction of guilt through God's forgiveness. The sins of a man's past need not defile him forever. We can escape the lonesomeness and loneliness of guilt by knowing that it is resolved in God.

Howbeit, there is nought to be gained from the belief that God's forgiveness can save men from the possibility of sin in continued freedom. If persons are not morally free to act in heaven, then there is no moral virtue in heaven. But if persons are free in heaven, as we are free now, then the presence of virtue in heaven depends on the presence of effortful care.

Christian writers at large have described heaven as a

community of spirits living in the highest order of moral love. It is difficult to understand how these writers can fail to see the contradiction in projecting heaven as an effortless bliss, then ascribing unto it the status of a moral order. Freedom is the first essential to a moral order, and lonesomeness is an inevitable concomitant of moral care. In heaven, as here and now, persons can never escape all loneliness, because they will always exist in relatedness as separate and incomplete selves. It was established in an earlier chapter that related persons cannot exist except separately. In a state of separateness or relatedness to others, each person realizes his inability to share wholly the lives of other persons. The privacy of individual existence makes any person inaccessible to complete sharing. There is an innate need in every person to discover the meaningfulness of infinite experience. There is a craving to share or experience the meaning of the infinity of God and creation, which is beyond the reach or power of the separately existing self. The singularity, separateness, and privacy of existence as a person is inevitably lonely. Each person feels separately, thinks separately, forever *is* separate. He senses the incomplete being and meaning, the seclusion in the privateness of existence as an individual self. The infinity of existing beings is infinitely meaningful, and every person longs for infinite meaning, and longs to be infinite being. The loneliness of incompleteness compels each of us to forever seek the meaning of The Infinite.

It happens fatefully that The Infinite is God's moral order, and a moral order is possible only through a relation of separately existing selves. A complete being could never subsist in moral stature. A complete person could never contain within himself moral parts, because a possibility of conflict between parts would denote incompleteness of security

against dissolution within. The complete person could not relate to others morally, for the simple reason that relatedness to others is the negation of completion. In a moral order, relatedness is dependence. A complete being could not depend on other beings, for the fact of dependence would negate completion in the dependent being. In God's moral order, no person can exist independently of others. We depend on each other, and we depend on God. Because God cares infinitely for each of His children, He depends on us.

The failure of Christian theologians to properly understand the nature of God's dependence on His children has caused much confusion in the minds of persons who have desired to believe in God's care for man. One of the first principles of traditional theology is that God is omnipotent. All imaginable things are assumed possible unto God, because, logically defined, omnipotence would mean the power to accomplish anything at all, however absurd, contradictory, or impossible it might appear to the human mind. Omnipotence means unlimited power, which would balk at nothing. An omnipotent being could both exist and not exist, could be independent of man yet related to man, and infinitely happy and unaffected by man yet care for man. That God is limited in His power is an essential principle to rationality and to deep reverence. We cannot believe that God's grace is moral, and believe simultaneously that He could deliver us from all evil against our wills. God can do for us only what we will let Him do. He does only that which it is moral to do; and He will not change the metaphysical conditions of His moral order. He is a God of virtue, of love and care, and in all eternity He will never change the fact that persons must exist in the loneliness of separateness in order to be able to love and to care.

We cannot believe that God is independent of us, and

believe at the same time that He cares for us. In a moral order, the dependence of every self upon all others is essential. If this were not true, then in His infinite superiority God could care for man only foolishly, or He could not care at all. Where care is not exchanged mutually, there is in the uncaring person the unconscious loneliness of false self-sufficiency, or the absence of the joy that can be felt only in moral caring. God has created every person because He has desired to love another person. He has desired to see another enjoy the fruits of creative living, of love, and of moral honor. Because God is morally concerned with what we love and how we love, if we were to assert that He is independent of us, then we should be saying, in effect, that He is indifferent to our conduct in life. But if this were true, then He would be altogether immune to our loves and hatreds, and His care for us would be meaningless or absurd. God desires that we move toward the greatest possible values, and that we experience the greatest love which it is possible for us to experience. This means that we must love Him, as He is the greatest worth and the greatest excellence. God is Supreme Value. When we love Him, we place value on that which is infinitely valuable, and love where love is most due. God loves us, and is dependent on us, because He cares to be loved in return.

When one person does not care for another, whether he realizes it or not he is lonely in his privation of joyful love for the other. That humanity is a vast, immeasurable mass of people all of whom we can never hope to know intimately does not mean that one cannot relate properly to all humanity morally. In his limited power to share the lives of so many persons, each individual will forever sense the loneliness of his separateness. If he does not sense it consciously, then he will subsist in it unconsciously. Christianity assumes

that the combined meaning of the various meanings of all private lives is possessed in the mind and personality of God. A man relates properly to the whole of humanity if he relates properly to all persons he knows through a proper relatedness to God.

It has been a tacit assumption of traditional theology that an achievement of this relatedness in heaven would relieve all loneliness. It has been taken for granted that in heaven persons would retain their individual identities, yet the loneliness that inheres in the sense of separateness of the self would cease to exist. The fallacy in this assumption lies in the inconsistency between the Christian ethics of the self and the traditional metaphysical theory of the self. The belief has rightly prevailed that moral merit exists only in an effortful act of good will. If no effort were required to will the good, then no behavior would deserve the ascription of moral merit. No person possesses the power to do good mechanically without effortfully willing it. If I may repeat an earlier observation, even God is burdened with freedom. He is not mechanically driven to love and to care for us. His goodness is infinite and eternal, but it is the trial of willful effort in His personality that sustains His goodness. If this were not true, then we could not even regard God as Personality. Rather, we should be compelled to consider Him a mechanism. Effortful willing is the most essential characteristic in a free personality. Any behavior that is not a consequence of effortful willing is a consequence of mechanical causes. No person can act, either freely or mechanically, without longing for something; and no one can achieve moral good without some effort to accomplish the good that is sought in longing. The traditional theological theory of the self has ignored the fact that personality is not possible without longing. It has naively assumed that in heaven

personalities can exist effortlessly and painlessly without even this most essential characteristic of selfhood.

Earlier, I stated that every person longs for completion. Yet, in the chapter on perfection, I asserted that men do not long for perfection; in reality they long only for indefinite improvement, because the achievement of completion would kill the creative life urge. The statement regarding completion may be qualified in saying that we reach for it, but we never achieve it, because we are confined to the loneliness of the restricted experience of being separate selves. That God might love each of us, and that we might love each other, He created each of us as a unique and separate identity, as an individual person. He conferred on each of us a capacity to long, and gave each of us certain powers and facilities to enact his will for self-realization. To say that God cares infinitely is to say that His purpose is to achieve an ever greater moral order of persons who can realize love and care to no end. In thinking of God as Infinite Being, theologians have not generally realized the appalling implications of a logical conception of infinite care. The word infinite means endless. Applying it to God's moral order, it means that, as a Creator, God will create to no end. His creation of more children will know no end, and the consequent increment in our responsibility of caring for others will know no end.

The notion that the process of self-realization is eternal is dreadful to many people. It is a fearful thought that they shall have to work and learn throughout all eternity, that they shall have to exert effort to love and to care properly for the ever growing kingdom of God's children. In the eternal moral order, all persons will be forever free to turn, to rebel, and to regress. The higher is one's level of achievement, the more painful will be the loneliness of moral failure

and regression, the loneliness of guilt in neglecting oneself, and others, and God. It has been poetized that before the face of God any person would stand enraptured. God's presence would enhance immeasurably a person's will to do good, his will to care and to love greatly. But this does not mean that a person hypnotized by God could escape his moral freedom, nor that he could become immune to the responsibility of care.

The fact that a moral order cannot exist without responsibility has been given negligent consideration in the traditional conception of salvation. That persons can exist in effortless ecstasy, free from the responsibility of moral care, contradicts the only metaphysics of selfhood in which righteous living is possible. Persons "saved" from the responsibilities that issue in righteous living in such a state would become automatons. They could no longer exist as real persons, because they could possess no true moral autonomy. In the traditional conception of salvation, reluctance to accept a logical metaphysics of the self may be explained in terms of a desire to evade responsibility. Eternal responsibility is a disillusioning thought only to irresponsible persons. It is true that sick persons, who are weak in body and weary of suffering from frustrated longing, naturally are disposed to imagine a complete escape from effortful existence. Persons of such sickness deserve compassionate understanding, and should not be confuted of any consolation they might derive from the contemplation of an illusion. But be this as it may, it is possible that even the most weakly sick may retain an appreciation of the facts of reality (once these facts are learned), and desire only an escape from pain, not an escape from responsibility. If a person's sense of duty to God is as great as his faith in God, he need not depend on an illusion as the source of relief of his pain. The com-

mon conception of salvation is not conducive to a great sense of duty. More frequently, it conduces to the notion that there is too little which we can do to improve our relation to each other and to God. It does not conduce to great care. It exaggerates the meaning of God's power and grace, and as a consequence fosters irresponsible living.

A more realistic philosophy of salvation can be discovered in a closer study of the character of Jesus. Our Lord's was the One, grandiose care of history, that of the Constant Man to save all others. Because He cared so greatly, Jesus probably suffered a deeper lonesomeness than we ever imagine. He longed to love all men, to inspire them to love each other, and to love God. The tribulations which men gave Him did not lessen His will to care. Jesus was superbly free of the petty tendency in men to love only those who love in return. But unrequited love hurts all persons who really care; it makes anyone lonesome; and because His care was so great, it made Jesus terribly lonesome. Only the moral sustenance of the Spirit of God within Him was His strength to bear such loneliness. The depth of Jesus' lonesomeness is indicated in His frequent retreats into the wilderness to pray. He longed for a love greater than He could find in the lives of men on earth.

Metaphysically, each of us is bound to care greatly for others, even though in his moral freedom he may defer such care. He who does not care at all, or who cares wrongly, whether he is conscious of it or not, suffers the loneliness of privation of the joy of moral care. And he who cares greatly cannot escape the lonesomeness of unrequited love. Jesus could not share rapport with men who found false escape from loneliness in iniquitous living. He cared for men who did not care for one another and did not care for Him. He encountered the carelessness of indifference, and the de-

structive care of hostility. The Spirit of God dwelt in Jesus, but the Spirit of God subsists in loving care, and it is not exempt from the loneliness that inheres in unrequited love. It is the painfulness of effort that gives responsible care moral tenor. Because moral love is painful, a person senses that he is entitled to compensation through requited love, and he longs for it inevitably. Jesus taught that we should love our enemies, that we should never cease to care for persons who do not care for us in return. It is the tribulation of such care that gives it moral meaning; and care in return for care is essential to propriety in a moral order. Every person needs love. Every loving person craves love in return. He deserves it. And in unrequited love he cannot escape the loneliness of frustrated need.

If an omnipotent, infinitely happy God could subsist free from a need for love from His children, then we could find no reason to verify the assumption that we live in an infinitely meaningful moral order. We should have to assume that God is independent of man, that He is in no manner affected by our care or lack of care; and because His well-being is independent of us, we can in no manner be responsible to Him. A God independent of His children could not serve them as a source of moral meaning. The loneliness of unrequited care in man is ultimately meaningless if God does not also experience unrequited care. Either God depends on man's care or He does not exist for man. To believe in an infinitely meaningful moral order, we must believe that God exists for us and that we exist for Him. It would be absurd to suppose that God is the center of moral meaning, that He loves us infinitely, yet could be infinitely happy if we did not return His love.

The failure of traditional Christian metaphysics to realize

the loneliness of God has contributed largely to the lack of responsible care for Him in most believers. We need a philosophy of salvation which inspires the kind of love for God which He needs and deserves. If men look closely enough into the personality of Jesus, they cannot escape the discovery that Our Lord was a Lonely Man. The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but He had not a place to lay His head. The will of God was in Jesus, but the power of God centers in righteous care. Because Jesus possessed this care, He could never escape the loneliness in His alienation from those He loved, who mocked, despised, and tortured Him. His power to evade the suffering of unrequited care was impeded by His will to please God, and by His will to teach men to care. That God's power was consumed by goodness is shown symbolically in His refusal to yield to Satan at the scene of temptation. He could have ceased to care for the salvation of worthless men. He could have let them wander in the loneliness of carelessness and sin. The lonesomeness of sin, or of isolation from one's brothers and God in a lack of care, is never as acute as the lonesomeness of unreciprocated love.

Jesus was free. He was the Son of God; and the Holy Spirit of God dwelt within Him; but He existed as a separate self, as a true moral being and person. He possessed the power to turn against God, as could any moral being who is related to God. Because Jesus was a God-man, possessing no power to escape the loneliness of unrequited care so long as he willed to care, He lamented the painfulness of His lonely existence and the bitterness of His duty. In the garden at Gethsemane, a moment before the betrayal and arrest, He uttered to Peter and the sons of Zebedee, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here, and

watch with me." Then Jesus went away from the disciples, and a little further in the garden fell on His face and prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

That Jesus was a morally free being, with a responsibility both to man and to God, is indicated in various scriptures regarding the freedom of His will. Offended at Judas for his betrayal of Jesus to the high priests,

one of them which was with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew a sword, and struck a servant of the priest and smote off his ear.

Then Jesus was moved to reprove His follower's violence, and said to him,

Put up again thy sword into its place. All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

That Jesus could have called for an army of angels, but did not, implies the freedom of His will and the loneliness and suffering that entailed in rightly exercising His freedom. At the scene of the crucifixion some persons passed by, reviled Him, and wagging their heads, said,

Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildeth it again in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!

Likewise the chief priests also mocked Him, and with the scribes and elders, said,

He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let God deliver him now, if He will save him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

The freedom of God to escape suffering is negated in God's righteousness. The mission of Jesus was to teach men to care, to act out the most momentous kind of care, that men might understand the importance of caring. If the loneliness which Jesus endured on the Cross did not evince the care of God for man, then by what kind of act could a moral God ever convince man? For those who will not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, who can describe a redeemer who could live a greater life and make a greater sacrifice than that of Jesus on the Cross? Moral care is the only issue in responsible philosophy. If the heart is closed to the care of God that is evinced on the Cross, then the pursuit of a real God in philosophy is a flight in the clouds of carelessness. It is the false desire that God *not be moral*, that He can save a soul from the painfulness of care—that makes the life of Jesus offensive to irresponsible persons. If we believe that a good God exists, yet disclaim the care of God revealed in the Suffering Son, we flounder in the illusion that the fruits of a beautiful life are possible in a heaven that is not a moral order.

There is either a religious or an irreligious way to evade responsibility. The religious way is to exaggerate the power of God's grace, through making Him omnipotent in one's fancy, believing that He will lift one into an ecstatic existence in which the rewards of care are possible without the effort of care. The irreligious way is simply to deny that God exists, and hence to negate in one's awareness the responsi-

bility of care that would inhere in one's relation to Him if one believed that He did exist.

The closeness of Jesus to God is greater than that of any other person whom we have been able to discover in history. Because the Spirit of God possessed Jesus, the feelings and thought of Jesus must have closely represented the character of God. When Jesus gave the disciples the Lord's Prayer, He made it clear that we can communicate with God, that He shares our feelings and thoughts, and that our problems are His problems because of His care. Because He shares our problems, God experiences the problematical nature of His own moral order. God experiences joy as He shares our thoughts that are noble, our love that is virtuous. He realizes rapture when we try to exchange the abundance of His love. But God cannot agreeably share our ignoble thoughts, nor the impropriety of our false care or lack of care. Because He cannot abide with wrong care, but cannot escape an awareness of it, God is lonely for greater rectitude in the children of His moral order.

The nature of the love of God in Jesus cannot be understood if we fail to understand the loneliness of Jesus. In the darkest depths of the pit of loneliness, Jesus cried out before He died, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Perhaps we shall never understand all that Our Lord meant in that outcry of agony. But we cannot doubt that it meant there is a terror in the greatest kind of unreciprocated love. The greater is one's love for another, then the greater is the painfulness of loneliness in the frustrated need for love in return. The carelessness, hatreds, and selfishness of men drove Our Lord into the bottom of the hole of loneliness. As He cried out for God, in the intense agony of His spirit Jesus perhaps lost sight of the greater suffering of God in His

mission. Perhaps the pain of God was so great that even in Him there did not lie a possible escape from the pain of the suffering of His Son.

If we believe that heaven is a moral order, in which spirits exist in a meaningful moral relation to God and to all His children, then we cannot deny that there is loneliness in heaven. God cares for all His children, lost or found; and one loving brother cares for all his brothers, lost or found. If the whole of God's moral domain were a heaven in which there were no lack of care, or in which all brothers cared properly for God and for each other, then the loneliness of existence would hold to a minimum in the experience of existence as separate selves. But such is not the case, because God's moral dominion is divided into the right and the wrong. If a brother could live in heaven isolated from his brothers in hell, then only a destruction of his memory could relieve him of caring for his lost brothers. To lose one's memory is to lose the most essential requirement for existence as a moral self. There can be no moral meaning in a relation between a lost and a found soul that subsists in an absence of memory. If the brothers of heaven care not for the brothers of hell, and do not suffer the loneliness of caring, then they are automatons in which the bliss of heaven is an escape from moral care. The traditional assumption that God is omnipotent, or that He can subsist in the contradiction of caring while yet not caring, is the product of an ambition to escape the painfulness of moral care through an absurd phantasy. The darkness of hell spreads some shadows through the light of heaven, and it frightens persons whose faith in God is sustained by illusions. It is time to end the illusion that righteousness can exist in one side of a split moral order, where persons do not care

for the suffering souls in the other order. If the moral contradiction in such an order could be removed, then why should God have created men free to care at all?

The painfulness of heaven is the loneliness in the care of the found for the lost. The painfulness of hell is the loneliness in the alienation of any person from other persons and from God. The pain of immoral care is hell. The loneliness of a poverty of love is hell. When Jesus referred to death as the wages of sin, He suggested the dispossession of all the joys of moral care. If death were possible, then it would be an utter absence of care. Death would be a complete privation of the fruits of care in living. It would be the stark, total, eternal abnegation of everything. There would be no conscious experience and no meaning in death. If death were possible, then it would be utter nothingness. But to be certain, we should commit a semantical error if we attributed loneliness as a characteristic to nothingness. For the fact is, any conception of the reality of nothingness is a logical contradiction, and there must be an existing, conscious being before loneliness is meaningful. Fear of death is not in reality a fear of nothingness—for there is no nothingness. Death as the reduction of the self to nothingness is logically unthinkable. The term “nothingness” has logical meaning only if it signifies no-thingness, which is simply a reference to the presence of process instead of a reference to the presence of some “thing.”

Fear of death is the self’s anxiety that it might lose the meaning of its own selfness. God creates all selves out of Himself; and if He willed to do so, He could negate all selves by converting them back into Himself. Every self except God depends upon what is not himself to sustain his own selfness. No human being ever created himself; and every human being harbors within himself a natural trepi-

dation that his self could lose its own selfness. Fear of non-selfness is the fear of privation of the fruits of self-consciousness. The most encompassing proclivity of the self is its own self-clinging. Nevertheless, that any self may neglect his own needs, and will to care little for the morality which is essential to the consciousness of the self . . . this is the fateful tragedy of moral freedom. When Jesus referred to death as the wages of sin, apparently He meant that eternal hell is the deprivation of the self of its own selfness, or else hell is existence in the loneliness of insipid care.

No one is offended by the assumption that we experience hell in our lives on earth. The painfulness of effort in responsible living and the painful consequences of irresponsible living cause all men to favor the notion that there is something of both heaven and hell in our lives in this world. Few people question the fact that we live in a moral order. It is generally acknowledged that care and love are the source of real values, and that improper care is the source of most evils. Because the traditional interpretation of the teachings of Jesus regarding heaven and hell is offensive, some writers have created irresponsible philosophies of salvation in their efforts to remove this offense. Traditional theology attributes infinite mercy to the heart of God. God is above offense, and is incapable of having motives of revenge. Yet, God condemns any person to eternal damnation who dies after a short life on earth unforgiven for his sins. Trying to overcome this contradiction, some writers have held to the illusion of God's omnipotence, and have fancied an ultimate salvation in which all hell is destroyed. At some time in eternity, the unlimited power of God's grace will save all persons from the exigencies of moral freedom. All God's children will eventually arrive in heaven, and will remain there permanently secure. In heaven, all labor will

end and all dreams will come true. The proponents of this theory have read exaggerated meaning into the prophetic scripture of John that

God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Traditional thought acknowledges that only a chosen few will reach this heaven. "Straight is the way and narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." But it is altogether inconsistent to believe that God would reject some and choose others, if there were infinite mercy in the omnipotence of His saving grace. The power of the God of traditional theology is unlimited, and because it is unlimited He could do all imaginable things. God could sustain a heaven in which His children are morally free, yet in which they never know moral freedom's meaning or pang. If God could simultaneously promote moral freedom in a person yet absolve him of the pain of caring for the lost, then by the same power He could absolve the sins of the rejected and end all schism in His moral order. The power of omnipotence would be the power to save all creatures from loneliness and sin, whether they willed it or not. That an omnipotent God would arbitrarily lift a chosen few into a blissful paradise, but cast all others into a bottomless pit of useless suffering, offends any person who has any mercy at all in his heart.

Alluding to the proper care of one brother for another, Jesus said to His disciples, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." This means, manifestly, that care for one's

brothers entails care for God, as also care for God entails care for one's brothers. For those who are unwilling to labor this care, alluding to the inevitable retribution in a moral order, Jesus said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Escape from offense in the teachings of Jesus is not possible if we continue to ascribe omnipotence to the personality of God. Reluctance to save the lost in His omnipotence would be the forfeiture of claim to infinite love. Only infinite mercy can sustain the infinite goodness of a moral God. The failure of God to save the lost belies either His omnipotence or it belies His mercy. Either a merciless God alienates His own children, or else He exists limited in His power to save us from willfully incurring our own damnation. Through a false ascription of moral value to power, theologians have blinded themselves to the contradictions in the concept of moral omnipotence. A moral God could not turn a deaf ear to a soul in hell, if in his alienation the lost one began to labor proper care. The care of God for the dispossessed is shown in the saying of Jesus that

The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if it be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

The offense in attributing omnipotence to God is the implication that He could save all men, but that He is morally derelict in exercising favoritism in His will. Alluding to the destructive care of material greed, Jesus said to

His disciples, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." And when the disciples heard this, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?" Then Jesus beheld them, and answered, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

The ascription of omnipotence to God because of this reference of Jesus to His power reveals a lack of insight into the moral meaning of the scripture. God can do all possible things, but impossible things are never things; and because God wills them to be impossible, not even He can do them. The teachings of Jesus in their entirety indicate that God can never save men from materialism who do not care for the spiritual values in which escape from materialism is possible. The preoccupations of men with material greed is a neglect of the kind of care for God in which contact with Him is possible. That God can do little for men whose hearts are closed to Him is evident in Jesus' pleas to care for Him in the Sermon on the Mount, as in His teachings in general. To grasp the meaning of care in the analogy of the needle's eye, we must heed the scripture which immediately precedes it. Jesus said, herein, "Verily I say unto you that a rich man shall *hardly* enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now, we may bear in mind that the word "hardly" is a joining of the word "hard" with its adverbial ending. That is, the word "hardly" means "in a difficult manner." The analogy in this scripture supports the moral teaching of Jesus that not even God can save a man against his will. The rich man hardly enters into heaven because he hardly cares for heaven. It is possible that he can unite with God only insofar as his care permits. It is inconsistent with the whole Christian ethics to assume that God would deliver

a person into salvation if the person were willfully opposed in care.

Only a desire to escape the pain of moral vigilance can support the myth of the omnipotence of God. Jesus taught that men are morally free. We may reap the woes of improper caring, or we may gather the fruits of effortful love. With no amount of power can God save a sinner from willful depravity. He may resolve the sins of our past, when we seek forgiveness through contrition of heart; but God is just, and exoneration of guilt can never forego compunction for guilt.

Desiring to teach His disciples the urgency of care, Jesus told an allegory in which a certain rich man, who fared sumptuously on earth, died, was buried, and then in hell lifted up his eyes in torment. This man in hell looked afar off, and beheld in heaven the man called Lazarus who had been carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Lazarus had been a beggar on earth; he had approached the rich man's gate, desiring to eat the crumbs that fell from his table. Lazarus lay on the ground, wallowed in misery, and the dogs licked his sores. The rich man protested this ugly pauper who disturbed his peace; he refused to feed him, and withheld splendidly in his lack of care. Now that both had died, as the rich man saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom he cried out from hell,

O Father Abraham, have mercy on me. Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

When Abraham beheld the suffering man in hell, he answered,

My son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between you and us there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they who would pass from there to us come hence.

Upon hearing this, the suffering man begged,

I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send Lazarus to my father's house on earth: for I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they also enter into this place of torment.

Then Abraham withheld, and answered, "Thy brethren have Moses and the prophets on earth; let them hear them."

Then the rich man cried, "Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, then they will repent."

Abraham ended the colloquy, saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, then neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

The implications of these scriptures regarding the mercy of God have been variously interpreted. Many have supposed that the story is to be taken literally. A literal interpretation of the dialogue as it is related in Luke suggests a lack of compassion in Abraham's speech, and almost a suggestion of self-righteous requital. To take the story literally is to lose sight of the teachings of Jesus that we must forgive always, that we are not forgiven ourselves when we do not forgive others. To cease forgiving is to cease moral caring, or to lose all moral sense of the tragedy of the lost. No

matter how injurious are the commitments of wrong against us, we must forgive always, because a grudge is a hindrance to the purity of love. We should be senseless to assume that God would ask His children to practice a mercy that is superior to His own. We should contradict God's goodness if we said that He gives His children only a limited time in which to be forgiven.

The story of Lazarus must be interpreted as an allegory, if we are to avoid the contradiction in the vindictive God who expects His children to excel even His own virtue. The fact that the story was told to the disciples, whose experience with Jesus is presented in reduced accounts of few words, means that much of Our Lord's elaboration of His own thought is lost to our knowledge. It is very probable that the disciples had discussed the subject of care with Jesus in many settings, and were prepared to understand the teaching of care in allegorical form. Even if the original document suggests a lack of pity in Abraham for the lost, there is yet meaning in the story to assure God's mercy. As an allegory, the story offers greater meaning than if it is interpreted literally.

Abraham referred to a fixed gulf between the saved and the lost. An impassable chasm between the righteous and the unrighteous attests to the tragedy that inheres potentially in a moral order of free wills. There are no facts in human experience to delimit the depth to which men can sink in depravity. Nor is there proof that men cannot willfully fixate themselves in a kind of distorted care that could endure eternally. That any man would forever rebel against God, and blind himself to his own needs, or willfully neglect his needs throughout eternity, is a shocking thought. But if the souls of men are immortal, and if moral freedom is real,

then it is a fateful fact that a human being may plunge himself willfully into an abyss of loneliness that knows no measure.

God's care for His children is infinite. God's suffering is His separation from those whose hearts will not let in His love. If the realization that God suffers cannot conduce to responsible care in man, then what can? Through projecting an omnipotent God (or a God who is above the suffering of care), traditional Christian metaphysics has deprived men of the only kind of understanding that tends to great care. Men who love each other do so because they know that only careful love can relieve the pain of loneliness. The loneliness of one man's unrequited love for another is also God's loneliness, because it is the frustration of God's longing that all men love each other and love Him.

The tragedy of God's love is denoted allegorically in Abraham's reference to the impassable breach. The suffering man who cried out from hell sought only water to moisten his tongue. In his plea that Lazarus warn his brothers, he willed that others might avoid his suffering, as he willed to stir his brothers to penance. But he did not himself repent. He uttered not a word of faith that God might save him. He did not show that he loved God. He did not even address his plea to God. He did not will the kind of care for God through which God's care could reach him. Wherefore, neither in heaven nor in hell was there an escape from loneliness.

The irresponsible element in the traditional conception of salvation is the fact that men have contemplated only the salvation of themselves. Absolution from guilt has been the first principle; but escape from loneliness has been the main object of care, and the loneliness of God has either been denied, underestimated, or improperly understood. A proper

appreciation of God's loneliness conduces to an attempt to lessen His loneliness, through willing in one's heart the highest kind of love for Him. It may offend some persons to hear that the salvation of men is secondary to the salvation of God. But seeking redemption from guilt is a quest for escape from loneliness in purer love, and the loneliness in God's guiltless, unrequited love is greater than any loneliness that is experienced by men. That salvation is a reciprocal love-union between God and His children is evident in all that Jesus spoke. The need to mitigate God's loneliness should be the first principle of a philosophy of salvation. We see this need revealed in the entreaty of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our Lord said to the disciples, "Herein is my Father glorified: that ye bear much fruit. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." From the fact that God may be glorified by the love of men follows the fact of His loneliness because of the lack of love in men.

God's love for His children is pure. His love is immeasurable, unbounded by the limits of measurable care. Because the being of all persons subsists in the Being of God, there is greater love in God than there is in the limits of finite persons. No child can love God as God loves His children. In the infinite greatness of God's Being is the infinite greatness of His love, and in the limit to man's being is a limit to man's love. Because God's power to love surpasses man's power to love, God gives what He can never receive in return. Because the passion of His love is infinite, the benevolence of His love is infinite. But the finiteness of man aborts inevitably the benevolence of God. What the Father does for the children, in all eternity the children can never do equally unto the Father. In a perfect world the Father's

love for His children would enjoy an equal love of the children for the Father. But morality cannot exist without finite beings. A moral world is a relation of selves. It is only by means of the finitude of selves that there can be any children, that there can be a Father. In finite beings there is no exceeding the limit to finite love. The infinite, supreme love of the Father is never returned. Even the care of Jesus, the Man Who Did No Wrong, fell short of the care of God. Jesus alluded to the inevitable loneliness of God in a moral world when He said to the people,

Among those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Even so, he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

This scripture betokens the inevitable burden of God's love, which is the disparity of goodness between the Infinite Giver and all finite givers.

A man approached Jesus, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" And Jesus mildly reproved him, answering, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, and that is God." The heroic effort of Jesus to care constantly for men was magnified morally in His admission of the greater care of God. As Jesus died on the Cross, the Father's suffering exceeded even the Son's.

It is in God's realization that His benevolence is thwarted that He is lonely. God's purpose sustains a moral order; and the inequity of love in a moral order is the inevitable fault of a moral order. The Father cannot receive that which He gives. His giving, without receiving, is the supreme virtue. But there is no changing the metaphysics of moral care. Unreciprocated love is wrong. Only the pain of bearing it can

make it right. The moral heroism of Jesus was His suffering. His heroism was His loneliness in His care. God suffers. God is lonely.

God's suffering must be the organizing thought in our conception of the autonomy of persons. Heretofore, the search for autonomy has wandered in a wilderness of wrong purposes and wrong cares. In psychology, the criterion of autonomy has been social adjustment, poorly understood. In metaphysics, it has been an ultimate escape from the loneliness of moral care. The loneliness in the unreciprocated, infinite love of God is eternal. The loneliness of men who care for the suffering of God is, *eo ipso*, eternal. From the realization that loneliness is inevitable in a moral order, it follows that the criterion of autonomy must be success in reducing the loneliness of men and God through moral care.

Human beings may adjust in a social setting completely remiss of care for God. They may live mutually by moral standards that close their hearts to God. They may thrive complacently in wholly secular cares, and deny that there is even a need for God. The easiness of psychological integrity in a conscience which is free from the conflicts of care for God is the happiness of the careless. At any time it is easier to achieve psychological integrity than moral integrity, if one's moral conception frees him of the problems of relating to God. A man may negate in his will the existence of God, as he can realize God's care only by acknowledging and seeking Him. God can enter morally only into a will that will receive Him. God exists, whether or not men will that He exists; but His existence for men is negated just as effectually as they may negate the care for what He can do for them. By believing that there is no God, men may escape the trials of greater moral thinking by negating in their wills the pain of relating to Him.

A distinction holds between psychological integrity and moral integrity, insomuch as the former is possible without the conflicts of moral care. A whole society of individuals may live in harmony in tending to immoral ends. The psychological integrity of the individuals in such a society may thrive free from the burdens of religious moral struggle. The psychological integrity of the *no-others* conscience is an example to behold. That whole societies have become *no-others* in character (witness the psychology of war) is an historical phenomenon hardly subject to doubt.

Out of fear of the loneliness of unreciprocated moral love, men may deny the need for such love. Men may delude themselves into thinking that they are not lonely in their alienation from God, because they fear the painfulness of practicing unrequited love for persons to whom they are responsible through Him. Escape from greater moral struggle through the denial of God's existence is complacency in the loneliness of alienation from Him. Denial of the need for God, and denial of the need for humanity's elevation through love for God, is a subjection of the self to a bane of meaningless loneliness. The atheist may relate successfully to others by his own moral criterion; but he fails to realize that a relation to God is more meaningful and demanding than simply a relation to man. The atheist does not *want* God to exist. By negating in his will the existence of God, he is able to relax in a way that the conscientious believer can never relax. He may will to despair; and in his despair he may will to be blind to his moral affliction.

The criterion of personal autonomy must be religious and moral. Autonomy is the integrity of the self; and it must be moral integrity, not the mere independence of comfortable psychological integrity. Moral integrity is the converse

of independence; it is the possession of the self through freedom from alienation from the self. Because the self is related to God and to others, and is morally meaningful only through this relation, the self is alienated from itself when it is not properly related to God and to others.

History is a tragic drama of alienated selves. No day has passed when men have not contested one another and denied God. No man has lived who has not experienced this loneliness of alienation. History has been the will of men to care, rightly and wrongly, little and much; and the great care of great men is all that has sustained the appearance of civilization on earth. In the personality of Jesus, history offers an example of the truest kind of care, and hence, the greatest example of moral autonomy. Our Lord never ceased to care. He never lessened in His care. He never failed to act out His love. It is true that in His cry of death He felt despair. But it was the despair of the righteous—the unique loneliness of an unrequited care so great that it could not bear itself. The scriptural relation of Our Lord's descent into hell is a relation of the despair of the righteous. It is that loneliness which the depraved in care can never suffer, the loneliness which is below even the most alienated soul in hell. No child can suffer as the Father suffers. The lost sheep are lonely; but the care of the shepherd is greater; and his suffering is greater. A finite person can suffer only finite pain. Considering the suffering of the depraved in hell, one cannot doubt the mercy of God, if he understands the suffering of God.

The only consistently Autonomous Man in history was crucified. From His suffering follows the momentous necessity to search carefully His character for the keys to autonomy. Except for the loneliness in His rejection by men,

Jesus was alienated from no man. Men alienated themselves from Him, but not He from them. The heart of Jesus was filled with moral care, and all His endeavors cohered with this care. The discovery of moral propriety in care is the first labor of personal autonomy. The most trying labor is to act out this care.

Jesus frequently reminded His disciples of the painfulness of effort in moral autonomy. That men may cease to care in order to escape the pain of caring is suggested clearly in His conversation with the disciples at the seaside:

This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart.

Men may negate the power of their own will to conquer loneliness by refusing to care. Sitting in a ship by the sea-shore, Jesus spoke to the multitudes, and in the parable of the seeds, said,

Some seeds fell upon stony places where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

When Jesus said this, the disciples approached Him, and asked, "Why speakest Thou to them in parables?" And Jesus answered, "Because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not; neither do they understand. Therefore speak I unto them in parables." This answer indicates that Jesus cared so greatly that He willed to teach even those who willed not

to be taught. In explaining the parable of the seeds to the disciples, He alluded to the freedom of men to alienate themselves through the loathing of effort:

He that receivest the seed into stony places, the same is he that receivest the word and anon with joy receivest it; yet he hath not root in himself, but dureth for awhile; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the *word*, by and by he is offended.

The *word* is the necessity for care in God's moral order. The tribulation is the effort to care. The offense is resistance to the pain of effort. Disclosing the fate of those who will not to care, Jesus said to His disciples,

Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.

This scripture confirms the commonly accepted psychological principle of habit, that an unwillingness to care alienates one from his power to care. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Howbeit, a person can always care. In the remotest depths of depravity there remains a power to will to care. The test of men in moral autonomy is their courage to care, whatever may be the trials of care. Men are never subject to insurmountable barriers to care. That finite persons can will only finite care does not vindicate the fabrication of insuperable obstacles to exhaust possibilities. There is infinite truth in the old saying that love can conquer all. Out of offense at the pain of effort, men easily magnify in their imaginations the barriers to love.

Moral autonomy may be a nightmare, as it was for the God-man in the climax on the Cross. Yet, when one person requites the love of another, and when the two unite with God, their power to endure tribulation is as great as the strength of their love. As wrong care may produce more wrong care, so also may right care yield more right care. The strength of the will to care can never escape the freedom to regress; but strength produces strength; and the measure of one's will to love is the measure of his salvation from privation of the fruits of love.

Unrequited love is lonely, but the joy of willing that it is right sustains the spirit in its pain. If only one man were right in the world, and the remainder of humanity were wrong, then the right man's unity with God would be more rewarding than a surrender to the wrong. Christ's suffering surpassed the suffering of every man. *Ergo*, His moral glory was greater than any man's. It is an inexorable fact that in a moral world joy and pain must go together. The hope of true love is that unrequited care will win care. In beseeching men to return good for evil, Jesus revered the hope that the loving heart will charm the careless heart. Though His ideals have been greatly ignored in the world, it is the hope of those who bear His Cross that love will win the world. In following Him, men foresee an eventual reduction in love's pain.

There is a proverb of Solomon that

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. Doth not wisdom cry, My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver?

The wisdom of Solomon anticipated the sayings of Jesus that

By their fruits ye shall know them. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentence. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Ye should go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it to you. Say not ye, there are four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Now is the time to care. The fruits of the passion of love repay love's pain in moral rapture.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that your joy might be full.*

In psalms of thanksgiving for the joy he found in caring for God, King David cried,

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. God is my strength in Whom I will trust, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. Let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice. Let them ever shout with joy, because Thou

defendest them. Let them that love Thy name be joyful in Thee. For Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt Thou compass him as with a shield.

In an epistle to the people of Asia Minor, the apostle John offered some insight into the relation of care and fear. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." In this scripture, John apparently had in mind that when one person loves another, he has no fear of the harm that the other can do him. But by itself, this scripture neglects to remind that men are not capable of perfect love. In a setting on the side of a mountain, Jesus lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said,

Love your enemies and do good to them which hate you. For if ye love them which love you, what thanks have ye? For sinners also love those which love them. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

The hyperbolic meaning of this scripture is revealed in a later saying of Jesus that "None is good, save one, that is God." Only in the infinite goodness of God is there perfect love. God's love is perfect not by the definition of perfection as completion, but by the fact that His love is infinite and constant. Only the infinite love of God is perfect; and the appeal of Jesus that we be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect is simply a plea that we exhaust our power to love. In infinite love there is freedom from fear, because infinite love carries its own assurance that it is infinitely right. In saying that perfect love casts out fear, John per-

haps meant to say that only in God is there perfect escape from fear. "There is no fear in love," but there is no fear only in perfect love. In finite love there is fear of imperfection.

In a finite person an element of fear is essential to love. Love is a sensitive respect for the needs of oneself and the needs of others. The loving person is sensitive to the harm that he can do to himself, and that he can do to others. In finite love, sensitivity to harm is fear of harm. In the limitlessness of His goodness, God knows that He will harm no others. He permits proclivities to evil in order that a world of free moral persons might be possible. But He allows no evils beyond what is necessary for a moral world; and He will redeem any person from evil who bears morality with Him. Within the reason of His Moral Being, His infinite love negates His power to willfully hurt others. Hence He is free from the fear of doing harm. But men are forever able, forever free to hurt themselves and to hurt God. The harm that men can do to God is His suffering when He is lonely for our love. Though God is fearless, He is sensitive; and His sensitivity is the essence of His love. In finite love, fear is a part of the vigilance of good will. The finite will is precarious; its sensitivity entails fear. Men cannot love without fear.

To love others is not to fear others but to fear oneself. The psychological autonomy of the person who does not fear others is vain if it is not also moral. Moral autonomy inheres in the knowledge that one's actions and thoughts are right. Only a person free from the delusions of false autonomy can subsist in right, and in his sensitivity to his precarious will he fears himself. In a moral world, every self needs must will vigilance, or else lose the fruits of love in the failure of

vigilance. Moral vigilance is the effort to care; and it is apprehensive of improper care. God knows no apprehension in His eternal vigilance. God knows that He will do no wrong. But vigilance in a finite mind entails the dread of mistaken care. A finite person has only finite knowledge of his future will. His insurance against himself is restricted. His moral care occasions dread. He *can* do wrong. He *may* do wrong.

The morally autonomous person is free from the fear of suffering harm when he is morally right. No power can destroy the person who is right. The security of the righteous is guaranteed in the saying of Jesus that we should "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." In explaining the parable of the tares in the field, which alluded to the tribulations of moral care, Jesus confirmed the hope of the righteous who suffer harm that is done by others: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The question of compensation for loving fear is treated broadly in the poem of Job. In this beautiful narrative, a wealthy but devoted and generous patriarch is presented with the most trying problems of faith. Job, the patriarch, is an upright man who fears God and eschews evil. It happens that in a discourse between the Lord and Satan, Satan insinuates that Job's piety is merely the result of a desire for sustained prosperity. The Lord then permits Satan to overthrow the great man's prosperity to test this point. Being the wealthiest man of all the East, Job possesses seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred asses. Satan prompts the Sabeans and Chaldeans to sweep his land, and to usurp his domain. They steal his camels and oxen; a fire from heaven burns

his sheep; and a wind smites his house and kills his sons and daughters. Satan strikes Job with sore boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.

Albeit the confusion and misery of sudden privation is extremely painful, Job rents his mantle, shaves his head, and falls down on the ground and worships: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The faith of Job's wife is that which "dureth but for awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by (she) is offended." In his dispossession, Job sits down and broods among the ashes of his home. His wife then approaches him, and chides him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die!" Howbeit, even in the greatness of his grief Job beholds her, and answers, "What? Thou speaketh as a foolish woman speaketh. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

Three friends of Job (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zaphar) hear of his affliction, and come to visit and condole him. A debate ensues, in which the friends argue vehemently that Job's condition is the result of previous sin. Their sophistry is vicious, but Job holds to his knowledge of his righteousness, and answers each attack on his conscience with vigorous spirit. Notwithstanding, under the increasing pressure of their reasoning, he comes to question God's justice. Though he silences his friends, he objects in his innocence to all the transgressions insinuated against him; and he beseeches God to explain the causes of his suffering.

In a speech out of a whirlwind, God answers Job's plea. However, He does not regard Job's calamity as a particular

case, does not disclose the causes of his suffering, and does not say whether Job has sinned. The voice simply challenges him to faith:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Hast thou commanded the morning during thy days, and caused the dayspring to know his place? Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare, if thou knowest it all.

The voice of God intimates that faith must go ahead of knowledge.

A youthful bystander, Elihu, intervenes in the discourse of Job with his friends, and proposes the view that afflictions are designed to test the depth and genuineness of faith. He points out that men may bewail their afflictions, but not be heard for lack of faith. Job does not accept this argument, because he knows that he is innocent, and abhors the thought that God would willfully subject the righteous to misery for no cause. Because the ungodly often abide in contentment, and the righteous are often afflicted with pain, Job struggles in the throes of reason. Nevertheless, for the life of him he never grows bitter, and at last his reason is consumed by faith. He humbles himself, and concedes the mystery of evil to God. Ashamed of the pride of his reason in need of faith, Job cries resolutely in penance, "O Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The poem ends with God blessing Job. Because his faith has endured tribulation, God restores his kingdom and family, and doubles his possessions. The poem is a classic

exposition of the philosophy of trust. For the righteous, the rewards of care eventually vindicate the trials of care. Job paid a price for his moral autonomy. His victory stands as a challenge to us to care. The fear of being destroyed by others did not burden that great man; but the fear of himself saved himself.

Job had the courage to use his reason honestly; but he wisely realized the limits of human reason, that the pride of his reason was hindering his faith. Job loved God. He found all the fruits of life in God. Because he loved Him, and cared ardently to share a part of his infinite goodness, even in his bereavement and suffering he feared Him. Because Job's reasoning was just and honest, God commended him, but reproved his hecklers for false judgment of His mercy. It was Job's humility, which consisted in the fear of himself, which held him to God.

The fear of the self in moral autonomy needs some distinction from the fear of the self in psychological autonomy. In all selves, either in man or in God, there is always some experience of anxiety. As we have seen already, God does not fear Himself, because He wills eternally to commit no wrong. Yet, God experiences anxiety, insomuch as He longs in plight for love from His children. That God is anxious for our love is an essential factor in His moral care that has been expounded already. Were God not anxious, then it is inconceivable that He could care at all. Appreciation of the anguish of God enhances the heart's care for Him. The fact that God understands His anxiety does not negate His experience of anxiety. God's anguish is perfectly moral. He has no fear of doing wrong, but has the suffering concern that others do right. Insofar as men may do right, and have knowledge therein of their rightness, they may share God's

freedom from fear of doing wrong. The achievement of this freedom in great godliness is "the peace that passeth all understanding," which Jesus promised.

Still, moral autonomy in the finite self is limited, and tends to a fear of God. Only those who stand in awe of Him can dwell in Him. In awe of Him, the heart is solicitous of proper care. The righteous heart is free from the fear of being hurt, but not free from the fear of hurting others; and it must bide eternally in the seizure of care.

The Mother of Jesus cried,

My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.

A proverb of Solomon affirms the reward of fear in the righteous: "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied." Before Jesus sent His disciples to preach, He enlightened them in the proprieties of fear. Referring to those who might persecute the disciples, He spoke of the urgency of the fear of God: "Fear not them therefore; but rather, fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." In an epistle to the Phillipians, the apostle Paul bears cogent witness to the fear of the righteous: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

In moral terms, there is no distinction between the fear of the self and the fear of God. When a man fears his own failure to care properly, he fears what God would have him fear. Yet fear of the self is possible without fear of God. A man may distort the meaning of his moral needs. Attempting to aggrandize himself in immoral ends, he may fear failure to achieve those ends. But even if he is very successful be-

cause he shows no fear, his courage is hollow. Cowardice is necessarily a characteristic of the psychologically autonomous; the morally autonomous can and must live with fear. In psychological autonomy, freedom from fear is conceit. It is self-eclipse. It is repression of the dread of seeing the true self. The fearlessness of the psychologically autonomous is false. The self blinds itself to the terror of seeing itself if it were properly probed. The moral man fears no man, and his fear of himself benefits others. But the will of the morally depraved to care is craven. He bears no fear of the harm that he can do to others, or that he can do to himself; for which reason, his care is cheap both for himself and for others. The criterion of courage is moral care. The measure of care is the measure of courage.

There is inevitable discomfort in searching the soul. Because of counter-proclivities in the self to good and evil, the self has always to guard itself against its own circumscription. Every man should exalt himself; he should act to rise higher than his present worth. Exaltation is real when it is moral, when the elevated self strives to elevate others. But the cause of social neglect is really the individual's neglect of his own true needs. Appeasing an inertia to moral care, any man may resist his own exaltation. In depriving himself of the harvest of God, he denies it to others. He may hold to his loneliness, and even debit himself into emotional, intellectual, and social insolvency. He needs and owes to himself the fruits of care, and his greatest problem is his own besetment. He can never destroy his natural needs, but he can deny, distort, and suppress them. Because of the pain of acting out care, he can desensitize himself to his own longing. He can numb his self-awareness, and fixate himself in a given stage of loneliness, or sink in it, and lose sight of his own privation. Most men commonly desist early

in their urge to escape their loneliness. In petty contentment they settle with cheap care and cheap effort. They inherit enormous capacity. They *could* live greatly. But they oppress themselves with a fear of sickness from over-exertion, as though a little more effort would distort the psychological integrity of the self. They thrive in mediocrity, in a deplorable condition of disrespect for their own endowments. They are wanting in gratitude for the blessings they possess, yet usually complain of everything but their own lack of effort.

Effortful care is the bounty of the great man unto himself. No matter what evils come into his life, the great man affirms life. He cares fervently for the fruits of God. He believes that God can be happy only in sharing His knowledge and love. Only by partaking more in God's infinite greatness can the great man sustain his finite greatness. Not to reach further for God's endless bounty of fruits is to be careless in heart. The heart possesses only that which it reaches out to possess. The man who loves God wants to love Him more; he stirs ever nearer to Him.

The heart of the great man is lonely. His mind is lonely. So is the heart and mind of every person lonely. But the great man is forever aware of his loneliness, and he is grateful for it. To him, it means that never in endless time will he meet any end to what he can achieve and become.

For the true thinker, no knowledge is ever adequate. Nor for the true lover is any love ever abundant. The true lover never loves sufficiently; he never knows that settled contentment which he could find if he could believe that his love had reached a fullness.

Because God is infinite, His bounty unto Himself and for His children can encompass no end. The world is forever open. The field of life is marked by no boundaries. The great liver will recognize no boundaries. No life is ever suf-

ficient unto itself. No knowledge is ever final wisdom. No love ever meets entirely the needs of any person or of God.

God is not *all* there is, because *there is no all*. In God, possibilities are infinite. And because of this, loneliness is infinite. The lonely person, who is properly aware of his loneliness, acts to overcome his loneliness. He acts to become more meaningful and valuable to himself, which makes him more worthy to others. By the grace of God he progressively conquers his loneliness. Yet by the same grace he weathers loneliness, eternal loneliness, to forever grow, to forever become a greater person than he is.

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